THE MASTER LIBRARY

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/masterlibrarymy0000walt

Owned
by
Royane
Harvey

The Art Institute, Chicago

O-Title

A FAMILY GROUP

From a painting by G. DeForest Brush

THE
MASTER LIBRARY

MY BEST BOOK

THIS VOLUME ARRANGED AND EDITED BY

WALTER SCOTT ATHEARN, A.M., LL.D.
Chairman of the Committee on Education of the International
Sunday School Council of Religious Education

ALBERTA MUNKRES, Ph.B.
Professor of Elementary Education, Boston University

AND

MINETTA SAMMIS LEONARD
Associate Editor, The Home Kindergarten Manual

THE FOUNDATION PRESS, INC.

CLEVELAND, OHIO. SPRINGFIELD, MASS. KANSAS CITY, MO.

Copyright, 1923
Copyright, 1927
By THE FOUNDATION PRESS, Inc.
Cleveland, Ohio
Imperial and International
Copyright secured
All rights reserved

Printed in U. S. A.

TO

THE ONCOMING GENERATION

AND TO ALL WHO WOULD HAVE A NEW
VISION OF THE BEAUTY AND
THE POWER OF THE
MESSAGE OF
LIFE

INTRODUCTION

THIS book has been prepared with the conviction that most of us begin too late in the religious education of our children. We allow them to learn a purely secular vocabulary and to read books wholly secular, before we encourage them to read and love the Bible.

My Best Book, then, meets three very important and difficult problems.

First, it furnishes the lessons a little child needs, in such a way as to make the strongest appeal, because they are in close relation to his play, his interests, and his companionship with his mother and the others in the home.

Second, it furnishes suitably graded reading lessons. These center about Biblical ideas, and thus they build up a Biblical vocabulary and encourage interest in Bible subjects. It is a series of carefully graded steps which lead from stories about the Bible and Bible characters to the Bible text itself.

Third, it stores the mind of the child with examples of great literature and great art, preëmpts his imagination and captures his affections for the good, the true, and the beautiful. It is a true saying that whatever enters into the first of life enters into all of life. The first pictures hung upon the walls of memory will color all future experiences. Whether she will or not, the mother must be the little one's first teacher of religion. Long before the child is sent to the Sunday-school teacher or to the public schools, baby lips will frame profound questions about origins and destiny. The mother's answers will go far to make or mar the future ideas and ideals of her child.

As a manual of early religious education, the volume has the following features:

MATERIALS FOR THE CHILD

In the first section are given the first pictures that should be shown the little one. Each is of classic beauty, but the choice has been made rather because of simplicity of subject and outline. Through these the few facts which the little child's mind and heart may comprehend as to God and goodness may be taught.

Next comes the Primer. In a new and delightful way it shows how spare time may be used with the child for a whole year in teaching the simple moral and religious ideals that every child should know.

After the little one has mastered these first reading-steps, he can gradually learn to read the text to be found with "Easy Steps in Picture-Land," and the short extracts from the Bible itself, included in "First Poems and Bible Verses."

This, we have said, he will do gradually and, of course, slowly. In order to excite his curiosity to read the actual Bible as arranged in the succeeding volumes, the mother should begin to tell him the best Bible stories before he can read; and so these are given in "New Testament Stories," "Old Testament Stories," and "Some of the Stories Jesus Told." These are told partly in Bible language so that the child may become more and more used to the phraseology of the Bible, and be charmed by its wonderful eloquence.

THE MOTHER'S RICH OPPORTUNITY

It goes without saying that the mother can do this essential task much better than the public-school teacher, or even the Sunday-school teacher. She has the child all the week, instead of a few hours a week. She meets him in natural situations of great variety. The mother actually lives with the child. Teachers may help him to know that "God is love," but in a much more intimate and constant manner the mother can show him that God is love, through nature, the child's play, the home life, and through her own companionship and guidance.

Just the Help the Mother Has Been Wanting

The plan is intended to make the mother's task easier. Here is material she has been looking for, but which, no matter how widely she might look, she never could find and collect for herself. The pictures used were purchased in a half dozen foreign countries, as well as in our own. More than a score of specialists who write for children have prepared the text.

While the Primer is in every way so carefully worked out that it may be used by a mother as an aid in teaching her child to read, yet, since most children nowadays learn to read in school, mothers will more often use it because they desire their children to have as good and as early a chance at the Bible as at other books. It shows the mother just how to do what she has wanted to do, but did not know how to accomplish. Is it not a pleasure for the mother to feel that now she can turn with her child from his bright school Primer to a Bible Primer, that is just as beautifully illustrated and just as scientifically and interestingly prepared as the little book he uses in school?

It is the hope of the Editors, that this book, so much in demand in many Christian homes, may be earnestly and successfully used for the religious education of little children, the heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Acknowledgments

In a large work of this character many sources have been drawn upon. An effort has been made to give due credit for all material used. The determination of authorship in some cases has been impossible. The Editors will be glad, therefore, to be informed, and will be happy to give credit in all such cases in the next edition of this publication.

The following literary material has been used by special arrangement with the author, or publisher, or both, and acknowledgment is hereby given:

"New Testament Stories," from "Stories of the Life of Jesus," by Caroline Kellogg, The Bobbs-Merrill Co.; "The Baby Who Was Taken Out of the Water," from "Children's Stories and How to Tell Them," by J. Berg Esenwein and Marietta Stockard, The Home Correspondence School; "The Strongest Man," from "The Bible in Picture and Story," by Louise Seymour Houghton, The American Tract Society; "The Nazareth Shop," by Robert McIntyre, *The Christian Advocate;* "Mother, Dear, We Love You," copyrighted by The Arthur P. Schmidt Co., Publishers; "The Friendly Cow," "Oh, What a Joy to Clamber There," by Robert Louis Stevenson, Charles Scribner's Sons; "O Father, Hear Our Evening Prayer," "When I Wake up with Smiling Face," by Abbie Farwell Brown, The Houghton Mifflin Company; "Peter, the Potter's Son," from "Little Folks in Art," by Dorothy Donnell Calhoun, published by The Abingdon Press, Cincinnati, used by permission of the author; "The Shepherd Who Didn't Go," from "The City That Never Was Reached," by J. T. Stocking, published by The Pilgrim Press; "So Short a Time," by Eleanor Robbins Wilson, and "Likeness," by Anne B. Payne, *Good Housekeeping.*

CONTENTS

EASY STEPS IN PICTURE–LAND

PAGE
A Mother and Her Baby 3
A Mother and Her Daughter 5
The Wonderful World 7
A Friend of the Forest 9
A Little Girl and Her Pet 11
A Happy Family 13
A Mother Caring for Her Family 15
Helping Mother 17
A Boy at Work 19
Going to School 21
Coming Home from School 23
Singing Boys 25

THE PICTURE–LIFE OF JESUS

The Baby Jesus 31
The First Christmas 33
The Madonna of the Chair 35
The Baby Jesus Safe from Danger 37
Jesus at Play 39
The Boy Jesus in His Home 41
Jesus in the Carpenter Shop 43
Jesus Going to Jerusalem 45
Jesus in the Temple 47
Jesus Blessing the Children 49
The Children Praising Jesus 51

THE PRIMER

A Letter to the Little Reader 55
Story 1 I am Jack 56
Story 2 Here is Ruth 57

PAGE
STORY 3 HERE IS OUR MOTHER 58
STORY 4 HERE IS OUR FATHER 59
STORY 5 THIS IS OUR BABY 60
STORY 6 THIS IS OUR HOUSE 61
STORY 7 IT IS DINNER TIME 62
STORY 8 DINNER IS OVER 63
STORY 9 WE GET NEW CLOTHES 64
STORY 10 WE ALL LOVE BOBBY 65
STORY 11 FATHER GOES TO HIS WORK 66
STORY 12 FATHER COMES HOME 67
STORY 13 AFTER SUPPER 68
STORY 14 BEDTIME 70
STORY 15 MORNING 72
STORY 16 WINTER HAS COME 75
STORY 17 A MESSENGER OF SPRING 79
STORY 18 MORE SIGNS OF SPRING 80
STORY 19 EASTER-TIME 82
STORY 20 WE MAKE A GARDEN 84
STORY 21 NEWS FROM UNCLE JOHN 86
STORY 22 HOW GOD MAKES IT RAIN 88
STORY 23 HOW THE WIND HELPS 90
STORY 24 WE GO FISHING 92
STORY 25 WORK FOR THE WIND TO DO . . . 94
STORY 26 WE GO ON A VISIT 96
STORY 27 SOME FUN AT AUNT MARY'S 101
STORY 28 HOW WE GET MILK 103
STORY 29 WHY UNCLE JOHN IS SO BUSY . . . 107
STORY 30 WE GO TO THE HAYFIELD 110
STORY 31 OUR WOOLLY FRIENDS 114
STORY 32 FOOD FOR THE WINTER 116
STORY 33 I LEARN ABOUT MY FOOD 117
STORY 34 WE GET A LETTER 119
STORY 35 HOME AGAIN 121
STORY 36 WE GO SHOPPING 124
STORY 37 MORE PEOPLE WHO HELP US . . . 127

PAGE
Story 38 God Needs More Helpers 129
Story 39 Thanksgiving is Coming 131
Story 40 My Wish 133
Story 41 Ruth's Birthday 135
Story 42 Christmas is Here 136
Story 43 Why the World is Glad 141
Story 44 What Jesus Did for Us 143

PRAYERS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN

Morning Prayers 149
Prayers at Table 155
Evening Prayers 158
Prayers in Church 169
Prayers for Others 171
Prayers of Thanksgiving 174
Special Prayers 178

FIRST POEMS AND BIBLE VERSES

Obey Your Parents 191
Always be Cheerful 192
Be Kind to Others 193
Learn to be Happy 195
Be Kind to Every Living Thing 197
Stand for the Right 199
Speak the Truth 201
Keep on Trying 203
Do Your Best 204
Do Your Work Well 205
Speak Loving Words 206
Be Helpful 209

NEW TESTAMENT STORIES, *by Caroline Kellogg*

What the Stars Saw 215
The Three Wise Men 221
Jesus in the Temple 225
A Happy Home 231

PAGE
The Great Physician 235
A Sad Home Made Glad 239
The Little Boy Who Helped 243
A Picnic of Long Ago 247
The Wonderful Story-Teller 253
When the Children Sang 257
The Last Supper 261
The First Glad Easter 265

POEMS AND STORIES ABOUT JESUS

Green the Hills and Lovely, *M. Scott Haycraft* . 269
The Helper of His Mother, *M. Woolsey Stryker* . 270
The Nazareth Shop, *Robert McIntyre* 271
Christ and the Little Ones, *Julia Gill* . . . 274
Peter, the Potter's Son, *Dorothy Donnell Calhoun* 277

OLD TESTAMENT STORIES

The Story of God's Garden 285
How Men Lost the Garden of Delight . . . 289
The Story of the Angry Brother 293
The Great Father of his People 297
The Little Boy Who Became a Prince . . . 311
The Master of the Land of the Nile, *Annie R. Butler* 323
The Baby Who was Taken Out of the Water, *Marietta Stockard* 349
The Strongest Man, *Louise Seymour Houghton* . 353
The Story of Ruth, *Blanche Winder* 357
The Little Boy Who was Called, *Blanche Winder* 363
The Shepherd Boy Who Became a King . . . 369
The Little Hebrew Maid 379
A Hero Who Feared neither Man nor Beast, *Charlotte Chambers* 385
Children of the Bible, *W. H. Parker* 389

SOME OF THE STORIES JESUS TOLD

PAGE
The Good Father 393
The Kind Neighbor 397
The Patient Farmer 401
The Happy Supper 403
The Ten Bridesmaids 407
The Three Servants 409

INTERESTING PAGES FROM GOD'S BOOK

The Lord is Our Shepherd 417
God is Our Heavenly Father 423
God is Our Helper 427
God's Glory in the Heavens 429
The Beatitudes 432
The Golden Rule 433
The Ten Commandments 435
The Two Greatest Commandments 437
Laws of Kindness 439
Verses for Thanksgiving Day 441
Verses for New Year's Day 443
Verses for Easter 445
Verses for Christmas 447

STORIES OF SERVICE AND DEVOTION

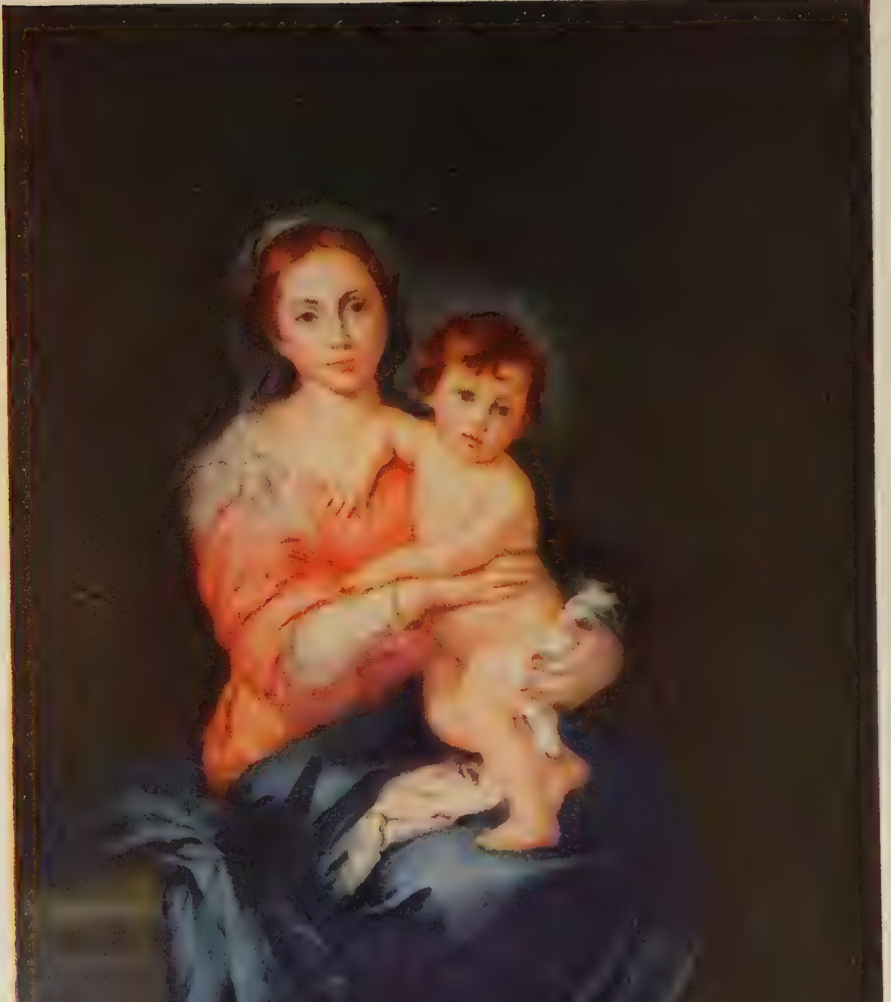
Francis of Assisi, *from "The Little Flowers of Saint Francis"* 453
The Shepherd Who Didn't Go, *Jay T. Stocking* . 459
Where Love is, There God is Also, *Tolstoy* . . 467

THE SLEEP OF THE BABY JESUS
From a sculpture by Joseph A. Gardet

DREAMS

Thine early dreams, which come like shapes
of light,
Come bearing prophecy;
And nature's tongues, from leaves to quivering stars,
Teach loving faith to thee.
Fear not to build thine eyrie in the heights
Where golden splendors lay;
And trust thyself unto thyself
In simple faith alway;
And God shall make divinely real
The highest forms of thine ideal.

EASY STEPS IN PICTURE-LAND



© The Brown-Robertson Co.

O-3

The Pitti Palace, Florence

THE MADONNA AND CHILD

From a painting by Murillo

A MOTHER AND HER BABY

You have all seen many pictures, I know, something like this. There is always a beautiful mother holding a baby in her arms. Sometimes she is rocking him to sleep and sometimes she is playing with him,—oh, so gently! We call such pictures "madonnas," because they show Mary and the Baby Jesus.

They do not all look alike. I wonder why. It is because each artist wants to paint the most beautiful mother and the most beautiful baby he can possibly find, and each one chooses the mother and child he likes best. Sometimes it is his own wife and sometimes his own child that he paints.

The man who painted this beautiful picture shows us a chubby little baby standing in his mother's lap with one dimpled little arm resting happily against her loving breast. See how gentle and kind the mother looks, and how contented the baby seems. No harm can come to him while he is safe in his mother's arms.

Madonnas hallow every home—
O'er every room where babies are,
Shines high and pure a guiding star;
And mother hearts do always hear
Divinest music ringing clear;
And peace and love, good will on earth
Are born with every baby's birth.

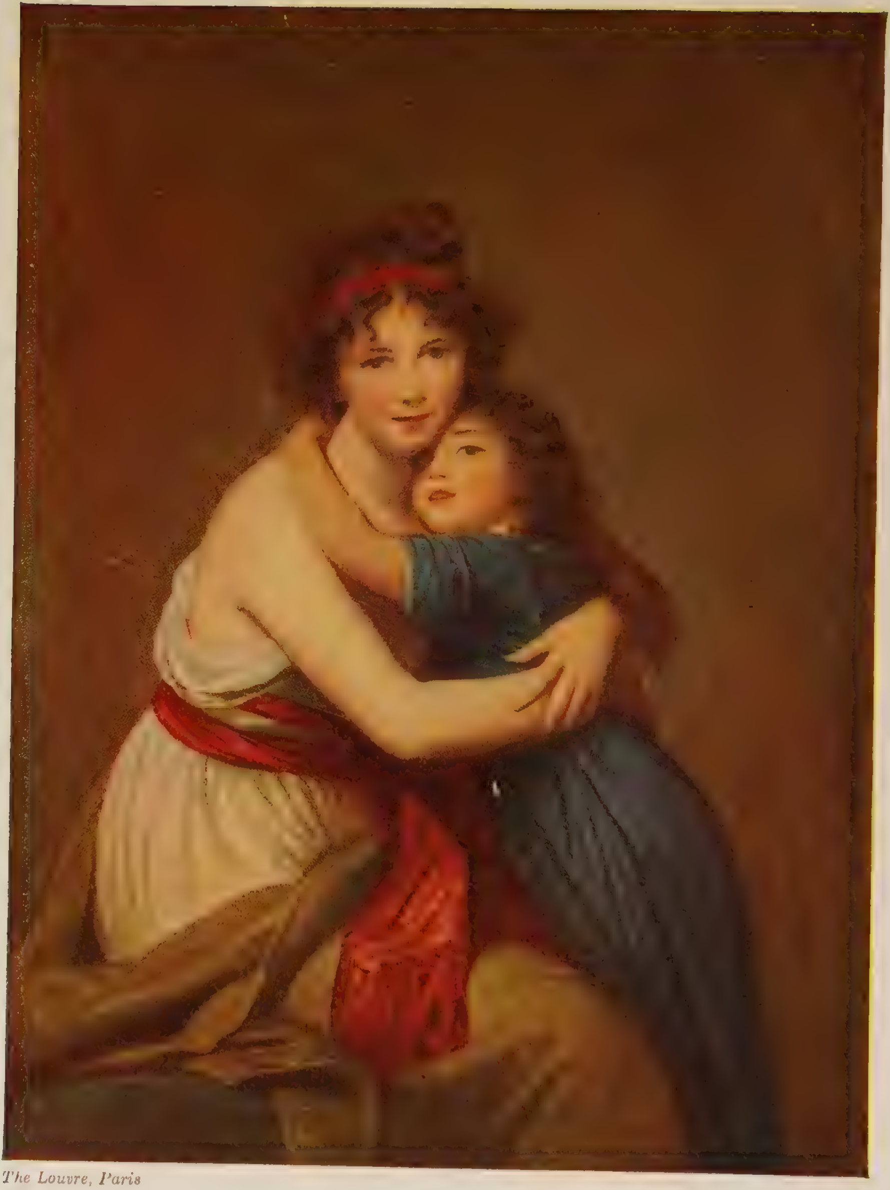
THE LOVE THAT CHILDREN KNOW

Little birds sleep sweetly
In their soft, round nests,
Crouching in the cover
Of their mothers' breasts.
Little lambs lie quiet
All the summer night,
With their old ewe mothers,
Warm, and soft, and white.

But more sweet and quiet
Lie our little heads,
With our own dear mothers
Sitting by our beds;
And their soft, sweet voices
Sing our hushabies,
While the room grows darker
As we shut our eyes.

And we play at evening
Round our fathers' knees.
Birds are not so merry,
Singing on the trees;
Lambs are not so happy,
'Mid the meadow flowers:
They have play and pleasure,
But not love like ours.

—*C. Frances Alexander*



The Louvre, Paris

O-5

MADAME LE BRUN AND HER DAUGHTER

From a painting by Marie Louise Vigée Le Brun

A MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTER

What do you see in this picture? I knew you would say, "A mother and her little girl." But that is not all I see, for when I look at this picture, I see the artist who painted it. Let me tell you a story.

A long, long time ago in France there lived a little girl whose name was Marie Louise Elisabeth Vigée. This little girl had the wonderful gift of an artist. Her father, too, was an artist, and when Marie Louise grew older, he taught her how to paint.

After many years, Marie Louise became a strong and beautiful woman. She no longer lived with her father, for now she had a home of her own and was known throughout the country as Madame Le Brun.

One day a most wonderful thing happened to her, —she was given a dear little girl of her own. Madame Le Brun loved this little daughter more than anything else in the world. She wanted people to see how sweet and loving her little girl was, and how happy they were together. If you look at the picture you will see them. Yes, the artist painted a picture of herself and her own little girl.

Does it help you to understand how much this artist mother loved her daughter? Now perhaps you can tell why this is one of the very best pictures Madame Le Brun ever painted.

THE DANCE OF THE CHILDREN

From a painting by Corot

THE WONDERFUL WORLD

Great, wide, beautiful, wonderful World,
With the wonderful water round you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast—
World, you are beautifully dressed.

The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree—
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on top of the hills.

You friendly Earth, how far do you go,
With the wheat fields that nod and the rivers that
flow,
With cities and gardens and cliffs and isles,
And the people upon you for thousands of miles?

Ah! you are so great, and I am so small,
I hardly can think of you, World, at all;
And yet, when I said my prayers today,
My mother kissed me, and said, quite gay,

"If the wonderful World is great to you,
And great to father and mother, too,
You are more than the Earth, though you are
such a dot!
You can love and think, and the Earth cannot."

—*William Brighty Rands*

ON THE ALERT

From a painting by Rosa Bonheur

A FRIEND OF THE FOREST

What fun it is to visit the zoo! Now, I know you want to tell me all about the animals you have seen there; elephants, bears, monkeys, and ever and ever so many more. Perhaps you have seen a stag like the one in the picture, a beautiful creature that likes best to live in the deep forest, and to drink from the cool streams there, and to wander among the shady trees and bushes.

This animal friend of ours has just stepped out of the thick forest to say "How do you do" to us. See how high he holds his fine head, and just look at those big antlers. Do you not think he can care for himself very well?

How quickly he could toss out of his way anything that would bother him! See what straight and slender legs he has, and you can guess how quickly he can skim over the ground on the tips of those dainty hoofs. And how intently he is listening to catch faint, far-off sounds that you and I would never notice, even if we tried.

In the twinkling of an eye, after this "Minute Man" of the forest has heard a strange noise, those nimble legs will carry him deep into the dark forest where he will be safe from harm, in his cool and shady home.

LITTLE MISS BOWLES
From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

A LITTLE GIRL AND HER PET

Here is a wee miss who is having her picture taken, —not by a camera-man, but by a real artist named Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Sir Joshua loved children, more perhaps than any other painter, and always wanted them to feel just as happy while he was busy making their portraits as they were when they were playing. So what did he do when making this picture of "Little Miss Bowles" but call in her doggie, with which she loved to play; and you can see for yourself that she is now very happy indeed with her arms clasped tightly about the soft furry neck of her favorite pet.

And doggie looks perfectly contented, too, in the arms of his beloved little mistress, because she is always so good to him. See how his little paw is half raised as if he did not know quite what to make of it all, for of course he never sat for his portrait before and does not realize how very important it all is; but he knows it is all right as long as he is in such good care.

Even little Miss Bowles herself never dreamed that you and I would some day take such pleasure in looking at the picture she posed for with her doggie! If she had, do you not suppose she would be very glad she kept so still and smiled so nicely while the artist-man worked away with his colors?

PLANTING POTATOES
From a painting by Millet

A HAPPY FAMILY

What do you suppose these people are doing? You will be able to tell at a glance, I know, that they are planting potatoes. But how queer! That is not at all the way we do it, is it? That is because these are peasant people living away over in France, a land far across the sea from us.

See what an odd hoe the man has. It is so large, it will hold quite a shovelful. He has just scooped up enough soil to make a nice, comfortable hole for the potatoes to snuggle down into until the gentle raindrops and warm sunshine coax the tender green sprouts to push their way through the earth up into the warm air above.

I suppose you have noticed the big wooden shoes these people wear. That is so that the rough stubble of the fields won't hurt their feet.

And of course you have caught sight of what is over under the shady tree! A dear little baby in a basket full of straw, and a gentle donkey standing near by.

How much the father and mother love this baby, I leave you to guess. I am sure they are thinking about their little child as they work here in the field, planting potatoes, so that they will have plenty to eat all through the long, cold winter.

FEEDING HER BIRDS
From a painting by Millet

A MOTHER CARING FOR HER FAMILY

Did you ever see a mother bird feeding her little birdies? She stands on the edge of her nest with a bit of food and drops it quickly into the wide-open bill of one of her babies. Then off she flies to find something for the next hungry mouth, for each little bird must have its turn until all are satisfied.

That is what a French artist thought of one day when he was walking down the street of a country village and saw what you may see in this picture, a peasant mother sitting on a low stool just outside the door of her cottage. On the step sat three little girls, and mother was feeding them with a long-handled spoon.

See how eagerly the girl in the center is reaching forward, almost losing her balance as her little feet tip up from the ground. But little sister has one arm thrown lovingly about her and is holding on to her hand so that she won't fall, and seems very glad that her sister is having some now,—hers tasted so good.

Big sister is looking on hungrily, waiting patiently for her turn, while in her arms she holds her own baby doll.

See, even a hen comes running over to pick up some stray crumbs, and in the garden you can catch a glimpse of father working away happily, for he knows that mother is taking good care of their little birdies.

THE CONVALESCENT

From a painting by Jozef Israels

HELPING MOTHER

Would you think that just a tiny little child could do anything to help his mother? Yes, indeed! Just look at the little boy in this picture and you'll see how!

Mother has been so very ill, she can only sit quietly in her chair and knit a little. She isn't able to walk around much yet, but she has a little helper who knows how to make her comfortable by bringing a low stool for her feet. It is almost too heavy for him to carry across the room; but I think he can do it, don't you?

Mother hasn't noticed yet, but think how pleased she will be when she finds her little boy so eager to make her feel better.

Don't you wish you could see her smile when she sees her footstool all ready in place for her? Would you like to know just how she will look? Well, I'll tell you how you can find out. Just try doing something nice for your own dear mother and watch the smile that comes to her face; then you'll know how this child's mother will look, too!

Mother dear, we love you,
And you love us, too.
You work so very hard for us,
We want to work for you.

MICHELANGELO SCULPTURING HEAD OF FAUN

From a sculpture by Emilio Zocchi

A BOY AT WORK

Once there was a boy whose name was Michelangelo, and sometimes he spent his whole day making pictures. Not far from his home there lived a rich prince who had many pictures and statues in his palace and beautiful gardens. One day the prince sent for Michelangelo and told him that he might come into his gardens and study and work as much as he wished.

What a treat that was for the boy! He had not been there long when he found an old piece of marble, and the first thing he did was to get a chisel and mallet and make a queer old face in it.

The prince was surprised and pleased to see what the boy had done. Just for fun he said to Michelangelo, "Usually old people do not have all of their teeth." Michelangelo looked puzzled for a moment, then took his chisel and removed one of the teeth. I think they had a good laugh together then, don't you? I am sure that the prince loved the boy from that moment and helped him throughout his whole life.

. . . Forget not while you live,
That in the smallest duty done
Lies wealth of joy for every one.

—*Maud Lindsay*

GOING TO SCHOOL
From a painting by Jean Geoffroy

GOING TO SCHOOL

Where do you suppose these children are going? To school, to be sure! See, there is the teacher already welcoming one little scholar, just inside the door.

Little Mary carries her lunch basket in one hand, and with the other she is holding tightly to big brother. Then comes Jack, holding his umbrella over his right shoulder just like a gun, and beside him is golden-haired Alice, looking far off across the fields.

The next two look almost like boys, don't they, with their hair cut short? But just see, they must be girls, because they have dresses on, and one is wearing a ribbon tied around her head. What do you suppose she has in her hand? Perhaps it is a cocoon with a butterfly all wrapped up inside! Anyway, teacher will know, and tell the children all about it. Perhaps she will tell them other stories, too, and help them read from their new Primers.

The tallest girl is Margaret, and she is watching to see what Bob has in his basket. He is so hungry he cannot wait for recess, and looks as though he were going to take just one bite of something good his mother packed away for him. What a happy time these boys and girls are going to have in school!

COMING HOME FROM SCHOOL
From a painting by Jean Geoffroy

COMING HOME FROM SCHOOL

Here are some more of our little friends, only this time they are coming home from school. Just look! It has been snowing! See how quickly big sister is going to start off with little brother and sister, so that they will not catch cold. Just to look at her anxious face would make you know that she is taking good care of them while mother is not there.

In the middle are two sisters in the third grade. One has learned to read so well the teacher said she might take her book home and read aloud to the younger brothers and sisters who are not quite big enough to go to school where they can hear all the nice stories.

But see how happy Fred looks! That is because he has the new little umbrella father gave him. And he has opened it just the same, even though it has almost stopped snowing. Perhaps he will hold it over sister so that she will not spoil her nice red and white cap which mother finished knitting just before the weather began to grow colder.

Edith comes last of all, because she stopped to talk with her teacher and get her slate so that she could draw pictures for her baby brother at home.

Now our work is ended for another day,
Put away so neatly; now 'tis time for play.

SINGING BOYS

From a bas-relief by Luca della Robbia

SINGING BOYS

When we receive a beautiful gift from any one, we say "Thank you," do we not? We say it because that is the polite thing to do; but that is not the only reason. We say "Thank you! Thank you!" because we cannot help ourselves,—we are so happy some one was good enough to think of us.

The Heavenly Father gives us so many beautiful things that we often say thank-you prayers to him. But we not only *say* "Thank you"; we sometimes *sing* "Thank you."

Often when you have been very thankful, have you not felt as if you just must sing to show your happiness? Sometimes when we feel that way, we sing songs like "Rejoice, Rejoice, Rejoice! Give Thanks and Sing," and "Praise Him, Praise Him, All Ye Little Children, God is Love, God is Love."

There was a great Italian artist who was pleased when he heard some boys singing happy praises to God. He loved them for it, and made this picture of them in stone. When we look at the singing boys, we are reminded of the verses in the Bible that say, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High: to show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night."

When the great artist was carving the picture of the "Singing Boys" in stone, he had this psalm in mind:

Praise ye the Lord.
Praise God in his sanctuary:
Praise him in the firmament of his power.
Praise him for his mighty acts:
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.

Praise him with trumpet sound:
Praise him with psaltery and harp.
Praise him with timbrel and dance:
Praise him with stringed instruments and pipe.
Praise him with loud cymbals:
Praise him with high-sounding cymbals.

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.
Praise ye the Lord.

THE PICTURE-LIFE OF JESUS

SO SHORT A TIME

So short a time at my command,
These children that I hold tonight,
God give me grace to understand,
Wisdom to guide their steps aright,
That I may be throughout the land
A lamp unto their feet for light.

So short a time do small hands cling,
With confidence of babyhood,
Let me not idly dream the thing,
But live the noble part I should,
That henceforth from such mothering
They shall instinctively seek good.

So short a time for my embrace,
For love, cheer, comfort, lullabies,
God help me hallow the brief space
That turns to gold each sacrifice—
So surely does a mother's grace
Build her soul's mansion in the skies.

—Eleanor Robbins Wilson

THE ARRIVAL OF THE SHEPHERDS
From a painting by Henri Lerolle

THE BABY JESUS

Do you see the beautiful young mother in this picture and the wonderful baby in her arms? No one needs to tell you, for you know, that the mother is Mary, and that the baby is Jesus, who was born on Christmas night.

You remember the Christmas story, do you not? How the shepherds were in the fields, taking care of the sheep in the quiet night, when suddenly, out of a bright light in the sky, an angel spoke to them and told them of the Baby Jesus. "He is born tonight," the angels said, "and you will find him in a stable." So the shepherds hurried through the streets of Bethlehem just as fast as they could go, until they came to the stable we see in the picture.

Do you notice how they are all a-tip-toe with joy and wonder? They must be feeling as though they were living in a story book, for never a more wonderful thing happened on earth than was happening to them this night. For—just think!—they were the very first to see the glorious baby for whom the people had been waiting so many, many years, the Baby Jesus, who came to show the people of the world the way to the Heavenly Father.

I think the shepherds must have been glad of this all their lives through, don't you?

HOLY NIGHT

From a painting by Correggio

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Think of that night, long ago, when the Christ Child came to earth! Can you imagine how happy Joseph and Mary were? Look at Joseph pulling the donkey back so that the baby will not be wakened, and see the beautiful mother bending over her child with her arms held lovingly around his tiny body, to keep him safe from all harm.

Some others were happy, too—the shepherds! They have come from the hillside where they were watching their sheep, and have crept softly up to the baby that they may see him and worship him. Look at their faces! I do not need to tell you why they are happy, do I?

There, lying so quietly on the fragrant hay, is the Baby Jesus in the midst of a beautiful white light, so bright that the shepherds draw back to shade their eyes.

In a country far away,
In a manger in the hay,
Lay a baby pure and sweet,
Lay the little Christ Child.

Shepherds watching in the night,
Saw above a glorious light,
Heard the angels sing of peace,
And the little Christ Child.

—*Mary H. Knox*

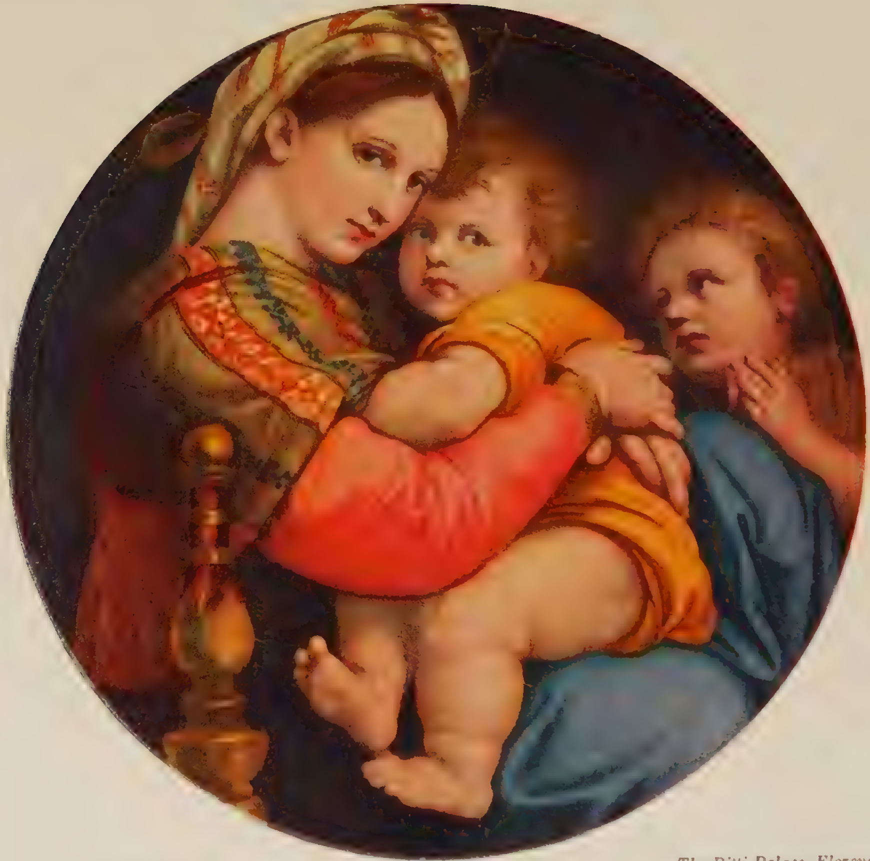
HOLY NIGHT

Long, long ago in Bethlehem
The Christ Child came,
With no one but His mother sweet,
To warm His little hands and feet,
And know His Name.

Still in the long dark winter-time
The Christ Child comes:
Have we no place,
O children dear,
Must we not wish to keep Him here
In our homes?

O Christ Child sweet, our Infant King,
We children pray,
Make in our hearts a little place
Where we may keep Thee, by Thy Grace,
On Christmas Day!

—*Evelyn Beale*



©The Brown-Robertson Co.
O-35

The Pitti Palace, Florence

THE MADONNA OF THE CHAIR
From a painting by Raphael

THE MADONNA OF THE CHAIR

Raphael was a painter who loved everything that was beautiful and good, and believed that nothing could be more beautiful than the love of a mother for her child, as everybody believes who thinks about it at all.

One day he was taking a walk, thinking of a lovely picture he would like to paint—a picture that would show how much mothers love their children; but he could not decide just how to do it. He came to a wooded garden by the side of a little home, where he heard children's voices. He looked up to see a beautiful young mother caressing her baby son, and a little boy playing beside them. The group seemed to make just the picture he would like to paint. Quickly he took the round head of a barrel standing near, and with his pencil sketched upon it the group before him.

He thought that perhaps Mary looked like this when she caressed the Baby Jesus, with the boy John playing beside them, and he used his talent, his brushes and colors to make his sketch into the beautiful picture you see here.

So it happened that a mother's playtime with her children, and the round top of a barrel, helped make one of the most beautiful pictures in the world, a picture that you and I may delight in looking at today.

THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM

Once in royal David's city
    Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby,
    In a manger for His bed.
    Mary was that mother mild,
    Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
    Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
    And His cradle was a stall;
    With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
    Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all His wondrous childhood
    He would honor and obey,
Love and watch the lowly mother
    In whose gentle arms He lay.
    Christian children all must be
    Mild, obedient, good as He.

For He is our childhood's pattern,
    Day by day like us He grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless.
    Tears and smiles like us He knew;
    And He feeleth for our sadness,
    And He shareth in our gladness.

—*C. Frances Alexander*

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

O-37

REPOSE IN EGYPT

From a painting by Luc-Olivier Merson

THE BABY JESUS SAFE FROM DANGER

I am sure you are wondering who the people in this picture are and what they are doing in this strange and lonely place. I shall tell you.

Soon after the Baby Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had to leave their home and hurry to this far-away country, because a cruel king wanted to harm the baby. I leave you to imagine how fast they traveled and how glad they were to be safely out of the king's country. They were tired, too, and just ready for a long rest in this quiet place.

Not even the faintest breeze is stirring. Look at the thin stream of smoke rising from the ground, straight up toward the sky. See the sandy desert, with not so much as a tree or bush or flower in sight, stretching away until it seems to touch the sky. And over all the beautiful night has settled down. The soft darkness covers the earth, and only the tiny stars are twinkling far away in the deep blue sky, sending their soft light down to the earth.

The donkey is glad enough to have the saddle off his tired back. Joseph has dropped down on the sand and is fast asleep, and Mary—do you see her?—is resting in the arms of the great Sphinx, holding closely to her the Baby Jesus, who is now safe from all harm and danger.

CHILDREN OF THE SHELL

From a painting by Murillo

JESUS AT PLAY

Jesus had one special playmate when he was a little boy, his cousin John. John lived up in the hill country of Judea with his mother, Elizabeth, and sometimes he came down with her to visit Mary and Jesus in Nazareth. Then it was that the two children had many happy times together.

We do not know how they spent their playtime, but probably they sometimes stayed in the carpenter shop, and perhaps they sometimes walked out through the crooked streets of the village.

Here they are playing by a pool of water, and Jesus is just giving John a drink. Can you guess what they are using for a cup? A shell—all pink and white and curly around the edge. John looks like a little shepherd, doesn't he, with a staff over his shoulder?

Do you notice that the children's pet is near? The little lamb is looking up at the boys and waiting patiently for his turn. If he could speak, I think he would say, "Please give me a drink, too." Do you think the little shepherd will understand what he wants? These children are so good to each other, that we may be sure they are always kind to their playmate, the little lamb.

Even the angels love to gather round these kind and loving children.

THE HOLY FAMILY

From a painting by Murillo

THE BOY JESUS IN HIS HOME

Did you ever wonder what the Baby Jesus did all the time he was growing up? I think he played about the house just as you do every day, and here is a picture painted by a man who thought so, too. See, here he is at the knee of Joseph, the carpenter, who was such a kind father to him. On the other side is his mother, Mary, looking up from her little spinning wheel to watch the baby.

What do you suppose Baby Jesus is doing? He has a bird in his hand held safe above the reach of the little dog. The little dog thinks the Boy Jesus is just playing with him, for puppies, of course, do not know any better than to hurt birds; so little Jesus is trying to say, "No, you cannot have the bird."

Of course you all know how kind and helpful Jesus was to every one in trouble when he grew up, and so it is not strange that he should help the poor little bird, even when he was only a small boy. Little folk can be kind just as well as grown-ups, do you not think so?

Little Lord Jesus, who used to play
With the children of Nazareth every day,
You used to be laughing and cheerful too;
So make me a happy child, Lord, like you.
—*Mary Youngs*

JESUS IN THE HOME OF HIS PARENTS

From a painting by Sir John E. Millais

JESUS IN THE CARPENTER SHOP

Here is a picture of the Boy Jesus in the carpenter shop. He has been helping his father make a door and has hurt his tender little hand on the sharp nail he was trying to pull out with the pincers. Mother is stooping to kiss her child, while Joseph is anxiously looking at the poor hand that is torn and bleeding.

And here is cousin John, whose mother, Elizabeth, brought him down from the rough hill country for a visit. See how sorry he looks as he brings in the basin of water for his little cousin and playmate. And how anxious good old Aunt Elizabeth and Joseph's helper are, over the wound of this gentle boy whom they all love.

Can you find a dove which has flown in and perched there on the ladder over Jesus' head, as if he, too, were sorry? And just look at the way the sheep are all crowding to peep in, as though wondering where their tender little shepherd can be all the while! Yes, even the animals seem to say, "We are sorry, dear little boy." And the Boy Jesus standing so quietly by his mother is just waiting for the kiss that will drive all the pain away.

He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
—*William Blake*

THE BOY JESUS ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM

From a painting by Otto Mengelberg

JESUS GOING TO JERUSALEM

Jesus had been living in the village of Nazareth, in the hills of Galilee, going to church and to school in the little synagogue there.

Many times pilgrims coming back from Jerusalem had told of the glories of that city built on a high hill. They had sung the psalm, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." This song had been written many, many years before, as a reminder of the beautiful temple built for the worship of Jehovah. It made all the little boys wish they were old enough to join the throng of pilgrims who would travel to Jerusalem the next year.

When Jesus was twelve years old, he took his first journey to Jerusalem, anxious to be in the temple, his "father's house," of which Mary had told him so much. What a wonderful trip it was, and how many new things he saw along the way!

The picture shows Jesus with Mary and Joseph, the boy thoughtful and eager as he sees the city in the light of the setting sun. Of what do you suppose he is thinking? What does he hope to see when he reaches the city?

"And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE WITH THE DOCTORS
From a painting by Hofmann

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

It was Easter week, and hundreds of people had come from all over the country to celebrate the holidays in Jerusalem and to offer their sacrifices in the temple. Among them was the Boy Jesus, who was just twelve years old. How many interesting things there were for this eager boy to see! Most beautiful of all was the temple with its tall stone pillars, heavy silk hangings, and decorations of gold and precious stones. Here we find the Boy Jesus, straight and fine and tall, standing among the teachers of the people, "both hearing them and asking them questions."

What questions do you suppose he is asking these wise men? Are they listening to him? Look at the faces of the teachers and tell me what you think each one might say to the boy.

Why do you think Jesus liked to be here rather than out in the noisy street with the crowds of people? Perhaps he said to himself, "Here is the place where I can learn the things my Father wants me to know. This is my Father's house, and I must be about my Father's business."

Lo, such the child whose early feet
    The paths of peace have trod;
Whose secret heart, with influence sweet,
    Is upward drawn to God.

—*Reginald Heber*

JESUS BLESSING THE CHILDREN
From a painting by Plockhorst

JESUS BLESSING THE CHILDREN

"Jesus has come over Jordan, and many from the village are going to meet him," said a father one day as he came home from his work. Little Rachel and Benjamin said, "We want to see Jesus, too," and "Jesus, too," echoed the baby. "Is he really coming?" asked the mother. "I have been hoping he would come near enough that I might take our children to him. He loves children so. I want them to know that he loves them."

So it came that Rachel and Benjamin and the baby, with other children of the village, had a visit with Jesus at the well-side in the cool of the evening as the sun was going down.

Do you see the child who has brought Jesus some flowers? Look at the faces of the children and tell me how you think they feel. I think Jesus, too, is happy.

I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,—
How He called little children as lambs to His fold;
I should like to have been with them then.

I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,
That His arm had been thrown around me,
And that I might have seen His kind look when He said,
"Let the little ones come unto Me."

JESUS ENTERING JERUSALEM

From a painting by Plockhorst

THE CHILDREN PRAISING JESUS

Through the great arched gateway he comes riding on a white donkey. Yes, it is Jesus, the kind and loving friend of all the people. See how glad his friends are! Some have thrown their coats down for him to ride across; others are waving palm branches in the air to tell him of their love. They are looking up at Jesus as much as to say, "Jesus, we love you."

I think that these people have spent many happy days with Jesus, don't you? Perhaps some were sick and he healed them; some were hungry and he fed them; some were sad and he told them beautiful stories. Now they are telling him of their love.

But I wonder if you have noticed the little children. How happy they are! See how they are scattering their flowers before him and waving their palm branches. And if you listen very carefully, you will seem to hear them singing their song of praise and love,—"Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna!"

As came the Jews to meet Thee
  With palms upon the way,
So we with prayerful voices
  Lift up our songs today.

As their devotion pleased Thee,
  So be our offering.
The song, the prayer, the praises,
  We bring Thee, gentle King.

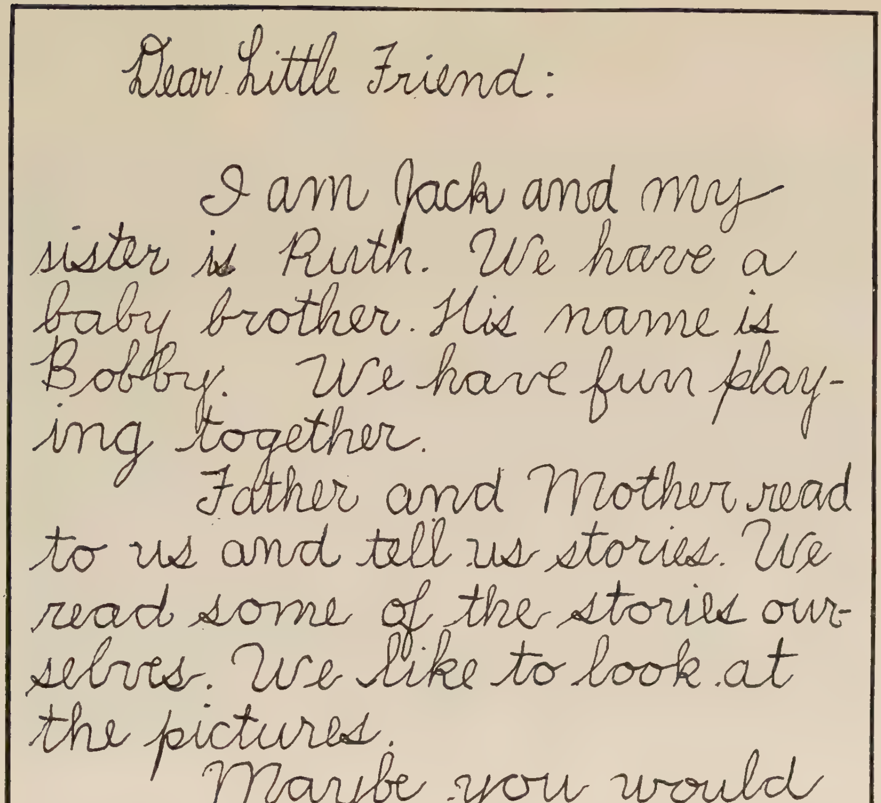
Metropolitan Museum of Art

THE MORNING VISION
From a painting by H. O. Walker

Not at some future time, dear Lord,
But now, just now the boon I ask,
That on my soul Thy grace be poured,
To help me in my God-lent task.

To lead aright, since lead I must,
This child intrusted to my care,
I need and ask, in sacred trust,
Soul-strength from One who taught us prayer.

THE PRIMER



Dear Little Friend:

I am Jack and my sister is Ruth. We have a baby brother. His name is Bobby. We have fun playing together.

Father and Mother read to us and tell us stories. We read some of the stories ourselves. We like to look at the pictures.

Maybe you would like to come and play with us. We live in the city but in the summer we visit in the country.

Your loving friend,
Jack

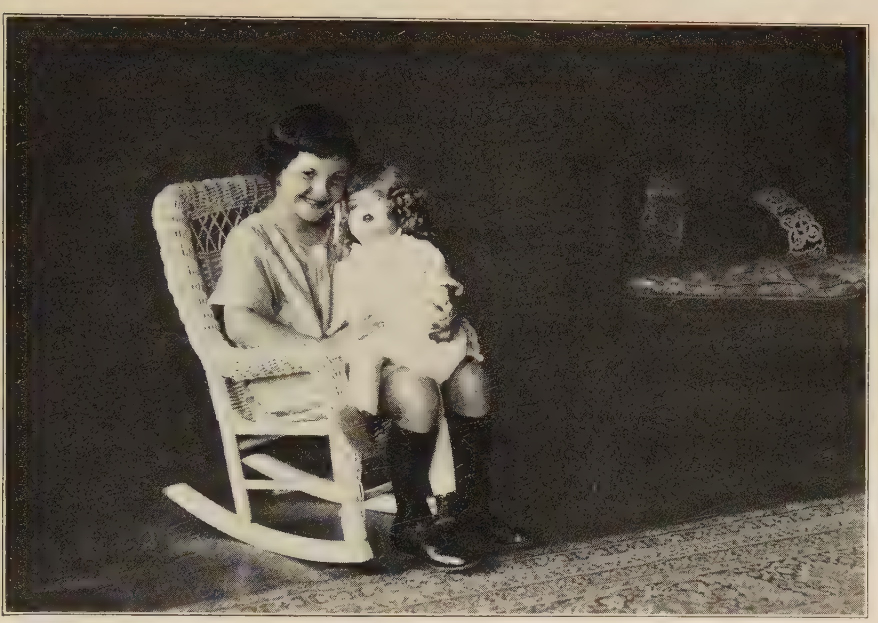
STORY ONE

I AM JACK

Here I am.
My name is Jack.
I have a book.
It is a new book.

"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us."

STORY TWO



HERE IS RUTH

Here is my sister.
Her name is Ruth.
Ruth has her doll.
It is a big doll.

"Let us love one another, for love is of God."

STORY THREE

HERE IS OUR MOTHER

Here is mother.
She is a dear mother.
She loves us.
We love mother.

"Honor thy father and thy mother."

STORY FOUR

HERE IS OUR FATHER

This is our dear father.
He is a good father.
He plays with us.
He reads us stories.

"Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord."

STORY FIVE

THIS IS OUR BABY

Here is our baby.
He is a boy.
His name is Bobby.
He is our little brother.

"If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

STORY SIX

THIS IS OUR HOUSE

Here is our house.
We live here.
We play in the yard.
Our friends play with us.

"Ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

STORY SEVEN

IT IS DINNER TIME

Mother gets our dinner.
We help mother.
She shows us what to do.
Ruth and I like to help.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

STORY EIGHT

DINNER IS OVER

Mother washes the dishes.
We help mother with the dishes.
We wipe the dishes.
We help put them away, too.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

STORY NINE

WE GET NEW CLOTHES

Mother makes clothes for us.
Mother mends them, too.
We know how to help mother.
We will be careful of our clothes.

"As we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men."

STORY TEN

WE ALL LOVE BOBBY

Bobby has had his bath.
Mother is going to dress him.
Then he will have his nap.
He has his nap every day.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love."

STORY ELEVEN

FATHER GOES TO HIS WORK

Father goes away every morning.
He works for us all day.
He comes home in the evening.
"Good by, father, come home early."

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God."

STORY TWELVE

FATHER COMES HOME

Here is father. He is coming home.
We always go out to meet him.
"Hello, father, we are glad to see you."
Father is glad to see us, too.

"We love him because he first loved us."

"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother."

STORY THIRTEEN

AFTER SUPPER

Now it is night.
We have had supper.
Father has read us some stories.
We are playing a game.
Ruth and I like to play together.
Father and mother often play with us.
We have games and stories every night.

We like to sing with mother.
She plays for us while we sing.

An Evening Song

Now the day is over,
    Night is drawing nigh;
Shadows of the evening
    Steal across the sky.

Now the darkness gathers,
    Stars begin to peep,
Birds and beasts and flowers
    Soon will be asleep.

—S. Baring-Gould

"A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance."

STORY FOURTEEN

BEDTIME

We are saying our prayers.
Mother teaches us to pray.
We know she loves us.
We have a happy home.
Love makes our home happy.

Mother teaches us that God is love.
God is our Father in Heaven.
He cares for us like a father.
When we pray we talk to him.
He hears us when we pray.
Ruth and I say our prayers every night.
We thank him for his love.
He helps us to be obedient and kind.
We pray that everybody may love him.
He cares for us all day.
He watches over us while we sleep.

Good Night

Good night! Good night!
Far flies the light;
But still God's love
Shall flame above,
Making all bright;
Good night! Good night!

—Victor Hugo

"The darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

STORY FIFTEEN

MORNING

When I wake up with smiling face,
The world is such a pleasant place!
'Tis like a mirror, great and wide,
Where I see smiles on every side.

Upon my plate my breakfast food
Smiles up at me and tastes so good!
The clock upon the wall, I think,
Is smiling too, and seems to wink.

—Abbie Farwell Brown

Morning is here, and a new day has begun.
It is time to get up and get dressed.

We wash ourselves every morning.
Mother is getting breakfast.

The cold water is good for us.
It makes us feel fine.
We hurry as fast as we can.
We want to be ready when mother calls us downstairs for breakfast.

"In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."

EARTH'S WINTER DRESS

The first snowstorm—a glorious sight!
When gentle snowflakes, falling light,
Cover the earth with fluffy white.

—Winifred Douglas

STORY SIXTEEN

WINTER HAS COME

This is Mary and Joe.
We can see them from our window.
Come, Ruth, our work is done.
Mother says we may go out to play.
See! the snow has covered everything.

MIDWINTER

"Mother, are all the flowers dead?"

"No, the flowers are not dead.
They are resting.
They are asleep under the snow."

"Are the trees dead?"

"No, they are resting, too.
When springtime comes, they will wake up."

"Where are all the birds?"

"They have gone to a warm country.
They will come back again."

WHERE THE BIRDIES GO

Where do all the birdies go?
I know, I know.
Far away from winter snow,
To the far, warm south they go;
Where they stay till daisies blow;
That is where they go.

Where do all the daisies go?
I know, I know.
Underneath the snow they creep,
Nod their little heads and sleep.
In the springtime out they peep;
That is where they go.

"Thou hast made summer and winter."

THE MOTHER BIRD

STORY SEVENTEEN

A MESSENGER OF SPRING

Listen! I hear a bird up in the tree.

I think it is a robin singing.

It must be very happy.

All the birds are coming back again.

They are glad to get back.

Now they will build their nests.

Soon there will be baby birds.

We will throw crumbs to the mother bird, and she will feed the little ones.

They will soon learn to fly and sing.

God wants us to care for the birds.

THE BLUEBIRD

I know the song that the bluebird is singing,
Out in the apple tree where he is swinging.
Brave little fellow! The skies may be dreary;
Nothing cares he while his heart is so cheery.

—Emily Huntington Miller

"I know all the birds of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine."

STORY EIGHTEEN

MORE SIGNS OF SPRING

Oh, I am so glad springtime has come. The sunshine is bright and warm. The leaves are all out on the trees. The old hen is out with her chickens. We like to hold the little chickens.

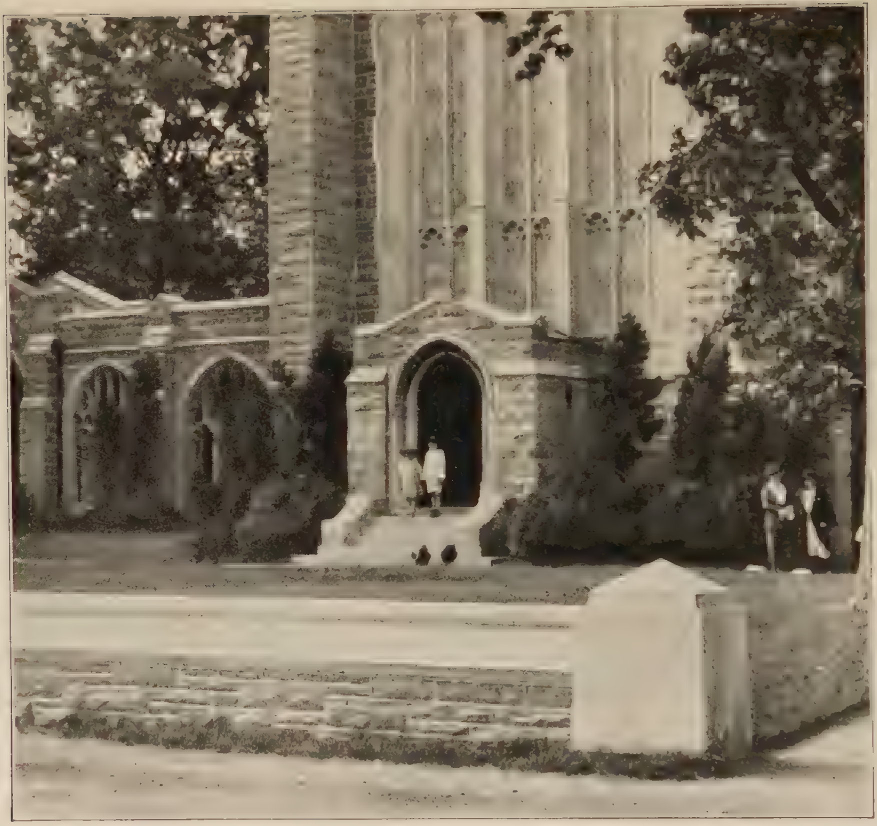
I saw a bird's nest the other day.
It was up in the top of a little tree.

I climbed up where I could look inside.
There were four little white eggs.
Today there are four little birdies.

> What does little birdie say
> In her nest at peep of day?
> "Let me fly," says little birdie;
> "Mother, let me fly away."
>
> —Tennyson

"Yea, the sparrow hath found her a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young."

STORY NINETEEN



EASTER—TIME

It is Easter, and all the world is glad. The people go to church on Easter day to sing to God and to thank him.

I want to praise God and thank him, too.

We are all going to church together.

Easter-time is the time for praise.

All the birds sing praise to God.

The flowers praise him.

The trees praise him.

Everything praises God, for it is Easter.

All the people praise him because things are alive and beautiful.

God has made them live.

AN EASTER PRAYER

For glad Easter morning,
When Earth's newly dressed
In beauty of blossom
From east to the west,
For Easter-tide music
In notes full of glee
To herald this coming
Of Spring's jubilee,—
We thank Thee, Our Father,
We truly thank Thee.

—Augusta Powell

"*This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*"

STORY TWENTY

WE MAKE A GARDEN

Ruth and I helped father make a garden.

First we made the dirt smooth and soft.

Then we dropped in the little seeds.

We covered them up with dirt.

"Will the seeds grow, father?"
"Yes, if they have water and sunshine.

We can give them water with our hose.
God will send them the sunshine."
See how father's flowers have grown.
Father planted a little rosebush.
Now it is big and has roses on it.
He wants it to grow on the trellis.

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."

STORY TWENTY-ONE

NEWS FROM UNCLE JOHN

We got a letter from Uncle John today.
Uncle John is a farmer.
He is making a great big garden.
It is so big he calls it a field.
He is plowing and planting his field.
It is too big for him to try to water it.

"Father, what will Uncle John do if he cannot water his field?" asked Ruth.

"He must wait until God sends the rain," said father.

"His letter says that he is very thankful.
When he had finished one big field and wanted rain, a big storm came."

"Oh, I remember the storm," said Jack.
"That was the rain we had Saturday.
We could not go out to the woods.
I had to play inside the house.
Ruth and I didn't like the rain then.
But Uncle John was glad to have it."

Rain

Down falls the pleasant rain
To water thirsty flowers;
Then shines the sun again,
To cheer this earth of ours.

If it were always rain,
The flowers would be drowned;
If it were always sun,
No flowers would be found.

"Then I will give you rain in due season."

STORY TWENTY-TWO

HOW GOD MAKES IT RAIN

"It looks like rain," mother said.

"Don't you think you had better take an umbrella, Ruth?"

"Yes," said Ruth, and when it rained she was glad she had taken one.

"How does God make it rain?" Ruth asked father.

"He does not do it alone," father answered.

"God has made many helpers.

The sun is one of his helpers."

"I don't see how the sun helps."

"Well, this is the way to find out.

Ask mother to let you heat some water on the stove in the big saucepan.

What do you see rising over the water?

Did you ever see anything in the sky like that?"

"Oh, yes, the clouds," said Ruth.

"Well, the sun warms the water, and it rises just as the fine steam rose from the warm water in the pan.

It goes up in the sky and forms clouds."

"Praise ye the Lord, who covereth the heavens with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth."

STORY TWENTY-THREE

HOW THE WIND HELPS

"Wind helps make rain, too," said father. "It blows the cloud in the same way that it blows your sailboat.

The sun makes the cloud, and the wind blows it from place to place.

Come into the kitchen: I will show you.

Look at the teakettle on the stove.

See the steam coming out of the spout.

Hold a cold china plate over the steam as it comes from the spout.

Be careful and do not burn yourself.

What happens to the hot steam when it strikes the cold plate?

See the little water drops on the plate?

This same thing happens to the cloud.

The wind drives it along the sky until it strikes some cold air.

Then little drops form, as they did when the steam struck the cold plate.

The little drops keep getting bigger.

After a while they get so heavy that they fall.

We call the falling drops rain."

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father."

STORY TWENTY-FOUR

WE GO FISHING

We have lots of fun on cloudy days.
We don't mind, even if it rains a little.
Fish bite better when it is rainy.
When it rains, we stand in an old shed.
When the rain stops, we go out and fish.
We may catch some fish for dinner.
Mother says she will cook the fish.

Oh, look! The sun is shining again.

I love the bright sunshine.

"Let's stop fishing, Ruth, and play."

We love to play outdoors when the sun is shining.

It seems to shine brighter after a rain.

The sunshine brings us the daylight.

It makes us glad and happy.

Mother says sunshine is like God's love, because it is everywhere and it makes every one happy.

SUNSHINE AND RAIN

What makes the fruit grow on the tree?
What makes the flowers we love to see?
What makes the grass and yellow grain?
It is the sunshine and the rain.

Who made the sunshine, warm and bright,
To make things grow, and give us light?
Who made the gentle rain to fall?
Our Heavenly Father—He made all.

—G. I. Liland

" *O Lord, my God, thou art very great! who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields.*"

STORY TWENTY-FIVE

WORK FOR THE WIND TO DO

I like the wind. It helps in many ways. It is fun to play with, too. It makes my little windmill go. It makes my kite go away up in the sky.

The wind sails my little boat when I take it to the brook with me.

The wind is the farmer's friend.

It helps him in many ways.

My Uncle John has a windmill.

He is a farmer and lives in the country.

He has many animals to take care of.

The windmill pumps water for all the animals to drink.

It cannot pump water unless the wind turns it.

The farmer is glad for the wind.

It pumps his water, and brings rain clouds to water his fields and gardens.

THE WIND

Who has seen the wind?
    Neither I nor you;
But when the leaves hang trembling,
    The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
    Neither you nor I;
But when the trees bow down their heads,
    The wind is passing by.

—Christina G. Rossetti

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all."

STORY TWENTY-SIX

WE GO ON A VISIT

Ruth and I have come to the country.

We shall spend the summer with Aunt Mary and Uncle John.

We like to visit in the country because we have so much fun.

We like to wander along the path to the woods.

The woods are full of pretty birds.

We are learning their names.

We pick flowers, and hear the birds sing.

Ruth and I like to run and play.

We may play all day, but my Uncle and Aunt cannot play.

Farmers are very busy in the summer.

They have much work to do in the fields.

We love Uncle John's little dog, Spot.
He is always so happy to see us come.

There are many animals on the farm.
Uncle John takes care of them.
We like to watch him feed the animals.
We are careful not to frighten them.
Sometimes we help Uncle John get hay for the horses to eat.

We help Aunt Mary on wash day.
We like to help her with the work.

Uncle John and Aunt Mary like to have us help them.

Uncle John works out in the fields.

Aunt Mary is busy all day at the house.

The farm is a fine place to live.

"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land."

Walter Douglas

OUR HENS

STORY TWENTY-SEVEN

SOME FUN AT AUNT MARY'S

We help feed the chickens and gather eggs from the hens' nests.

We always count the eggs.

Uncle John sells many of them.

Aunt Mary uses some to cook with.

Aunt Mary lets us make ice cream.

We mix up some milk and eggs.

Then we put in a little cream and sugar.

Then Aunt Mary cooks it a little for us.

Uncle John showed us how to freeze it.

How fine it tasted when it was done!

"No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

STORY TWENTY-EIGHT

HOW WE GET MILK

We get milk from the cows.
Uncle John has a great many cows.
He milks them night and morning.
We drink the milk when it is warm.
Little calves and pigs like milk, too.

Gaetano Palizzi

The Cow

The friendly cow all red and white
I love with all my heart;
She gives us cream with all her might
To eat with apple tart.

—R. L. Stevenson

Every day the cows go out to pasture. They must have plenty of grass to eat.

If cows do not get fresh grass to eat, they cannot give good milk.

Ruth and I like to go and get the cows.

We go with Uncle John every evening.

Sometimes the cows are in the woods.

Then we have to hunt to find them.

Uncle John's dog, Spot, goes with us.

He likes to bark when he sees the cows.

Look, Ruth, there is Mr. Jones!

Come, let us run out to meet him.

Mr. Jones comes to the farm often.

He gets milk and butter from Uncle John.

He sells it to the people in town because they cannot keep cows.

We like to drive his big white horse.

"Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever."

STORY TWENTY-NINE

WHY UNCLE JOHN IS SO BUSY

Look at the horse eat the ear of corn.

In winter there is no corn or grass for any of the cows and horses and sheep to eat.

The ground is frozen hard and nothing can grow.

I wonder what the animals do then.

David Murray

MEADOW SWEETS

I asked Uncle John about it.

"Why, they will have to live on what I can save for them now," he said.

"That is one reason I have to work so hard before cold weather.

We must raise all these things while it is summer.

Then we must put them away where they will keep through the winter.

You have been watching Aunt Mary can the fruit for winter.

She must work hard, too, saving food for the family."

We plow the fields, and scatter
    The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered
    By God's almighty hand;
He sends the snow in winter,
    The warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine,
    And soft refreshing rain.
—Matthias Claudius

"*For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.*"

STORY THIRTY

WE GO TO THE HAYFIELD

"Today," said Uncle John, "we begin to make hay to put in the barn.

"You and Ruth may go out to the hayfield."

So Ruth and I crossed the daisy field to the meadow where Uncle John was.

We sat in the shade and watched the men get the hay ready.

It took them a long time; so Ruth and I went back to the daisy field.

We picked two big bunches of daisies, and then came to the hayfield again.

The men raked the hay with a big rake.

It was pulled by one of the horses.

They went back and forth until all the dried grass was raked into rows.

Then they put it into little piles, loaded it on wagons, and stored it in the barn.

We rode in on top of a great big load.

The horses pulled it into the barn.

The top of the barn is full of hay.

Ruth and I may play in the hay on rainy days. We like that.

We stand on a high place and then jump down on the big piles of hay.

THE HAYLOFT

Through all the pleasant meadow-side
The grass grew shoulder-high,
Till the shining scythes went far and wide
And cut it down to dry.

These green and sweetly smelling crops
They led in wagons home;
And they piled them here in mountain tops
For mountaineers to roam. . . .

Oh, what a joy to clamber there,
Oh, what a place for play,
With the sweet, the dim, the dusty air,
The happy hills of hay!

—R. L. Stevenson

"He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle."

PLAYING IN THE BARN

Whenever comes a rainy day,
Out in the barn we like to play.

STORY THIRTY-ONE

OUR WOOLLY FRIENDS

Uncle John has some nice sheep.

The sheep are in the pasture all summer.

Ruth and I like to go to the pasture.

There are little lambs there, too.

The old sheep have thick, woolly coats.

Aunt Mary told us that last spring all their wool was cut off.

Cutting the wool off is "shearing."

They would suffer in warm weather if they had their winter coats on.

They shear the sheep every spring.

Ruth and I are coming out to the farm some time to watch the men shear the sheep.

At the mill they will make warm cloth out of the wool.

Wool is needed to make warm clothing for people to wear in winter.

LAMBKINS

On the grassy banks,
Lambkins and their pranks;
Woolly sisters, woolly brothers,
Jumping off their feet;
While their woolly mothers
Watch by them and bleat.

—Christina G. Rossetti

"The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field."

STORY THIRTY-TWO

FOOD FOR THE WINTER

When Ruth and I were playing in the barn one day, we found several big boxes, called bins.

Some were filled with oats, some with corn, and some were filled with bran.

Uncle John said they were filled with food for the animals for winter.

"Oh, did you raise all those things, Uncle John?"

"No, Jack, many other farmers helped me. They raised much more than they needed, so they sold to me and to others who did not raise such things.

Just so, we raise more vegetables and wheat than we need, and sell to people who have none."

"Thou crownest the year with thy goodness."

STORY THIRTY-THREE

I LEARN ABOUT MY FOOD

"But why should any one want to buy wheat, Uncle John?

"You do not feed it to your animals, and we do not eat it at the table, either."

"Ho! Little son, don't you eat wheat?"

"No, Uncle John, I never tasted it."

"Well, Jack, what a joke that is!

"You eat bread made from flour every day, and flour is wheat ground very fine."

"But, Uncle John," said Ruth, "wheat is yellow and flour is white."

"Next time you go out to the wheat field, Ruth, pick some of the wheat heads: rub off the hulls in your hands, and then grind the wheat in the coffee grinder."

That very day Ruth and I tried it, but it was not fine like flour.

Ruth told Uncle John so at supper.

"That is true," he said, "we haven't the big grinders to grind it fine enough; so we sell our wheat to the miller.

"He makes it into flour to sell to others."

"He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread."

STORY THIRTY-FOUR

WE GET A LETTER

The postmaster gave us some letters.
We often get letters for Uncle John.
Today one came for Ruth and me.
It was from mother and father.
They say they are lonesome.
They want us to come home.

Summer is over and school will soon begin, so we must go back home.

We wish Spot could go along with us.

Uncle John will take us to the train.

"Good by, Aunt Mary, good by.

"Thank you for the good time we have had this summer."

"Apply thy heart unto instruction and thine ears to the words of knowledge."

STORY THIRTY–FIVE

HOME AGAIN

Here we are home again.
Oh, mother, we are so glad to see you.
We ran as soon as we saw the house.
How glad we are to be back home.
We can hardly wait to see father.

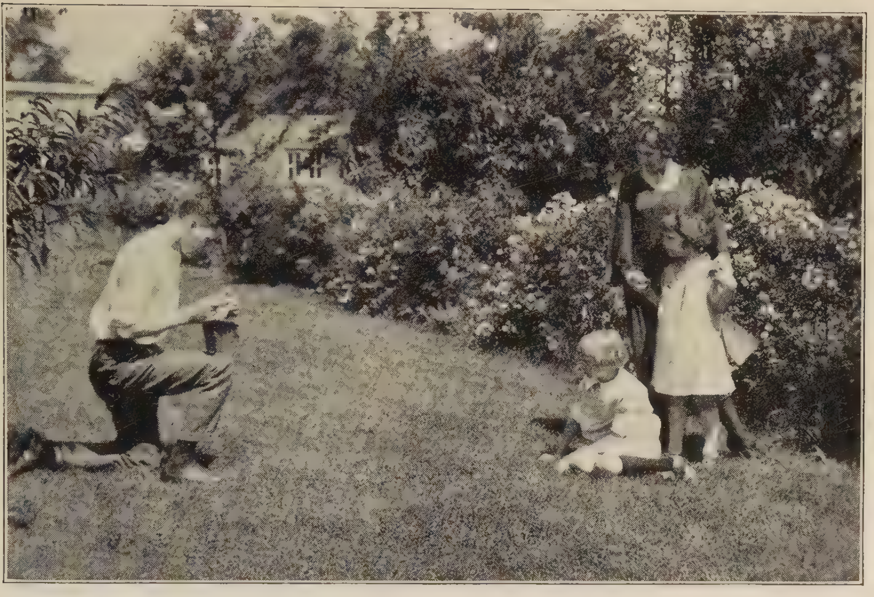
Look! There is dear little Bobby asleep in his baby carriage.

Mother says we must be careful not to wake him because he must have his nap.

He looks so cute lying there asleep that we can hardly keep from kissing him.

Father left his office early today.

How glad we were to see him again!



He showed us the flowers in the garden.

Then he took a picture of all of us.

How big all the flowers have grown!

Father and mother say we have grown, too.

We will tell them all we did at the farm.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right."

STORY THIRTY-SIX

WE GO SHOPPING

Today we went down town with mother to get new clothes to wear.

We must have new shoes for school.

We stopped at father's office a while.

He earns the money to pay for them.

Father could not go shopping with us; he has to work at his office.

We like to go to the grocery because we can buy ice cream cones there.

We get other things to eat there, too.

The grocer has fruit and vegetables.

The grocery store we go to is near by.

It is around the corner from our house; so it is only a short walk.

Mother ordered some grapes at the store.

She is going to make jelly for us.

The jelly will taste good next winter.

I am glad our town has so many stores where we may get all the things we need to eat and wear.

There are no grapes growing in our yard.

We have no cows or chickens, either, as Uncle John has out on his farm.

We buy our milk from the milkman.

He brings it to the house every morning.

We get our butter and eggs at the store.

Father of all, in Heav'n above,
We thank thee for Thy love.
Our food, our homes, and all we wear,
Tell of Thy loving care.

—Patty S. Hill

"Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits."

STORY THIRTY-SEVEN

MORE PEOPLE WHO HELP US

Father took us over to see the train.
My, how does it go so fast!

We watched it till it got out of sight.

"Where is it going?" asked Ruth.

"To take things to people who have no farms of their own," said father.

"Farmers like your Uncle sell the fruit and grain they raise, and the train takes it to people who need it."

"Does it bring us things, too?" I asked.

"Yes, our oranges and our lemons are all brought to us. They do not grow here.

"It takes freight handlers, engineers, firemen, and many others to bring all these things to us.

"They bring the coal we use, too."

I am glad there are so many workers.

They help to take care of us.

I want to be a worker when I grow up.

"Thou shalt eat the labor of thy hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee."

STORY THIRTY-EIGHT

GOD NEEDS MORE HELPERS

"Oh, mother," cried Ruth, as she ran into the house from school, "Julia Rice hasn't been at school for two days! "We all wondered what was the matter.

"The visiting nurse called at their house, and what do you think she found out?

"Julia hasn't enough warm clothes, and they haven't coal to heat the house.

"Mother, I wish they might have as many good things as we have."

"So do I, my little girl," said mother. "God loves all his children dearly, and would like every one of them to have plenty of good things and a nice home. So he wants those who have everything they need to help others all they can."

"I wish we might help Julia."

"We will," said mother. "We who have enough must share what we have with others."

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble."

STORY THIRTY-NINE

THANKSGIVING IS COMING

The leaves have fallen from the trees.
The days are growing colder.

But we are not afraid of cold weather.

We like it when it is cold outside.

The coal man has filled the coal bin, so we shall all be nice and warm in the house when it is cold outdoors.

Mother has much fruit and jelly down in the fruit cellar.

She has bought warm clothes for us, too.

Come on, old winter, with your ice and snow. We are all ready for you.

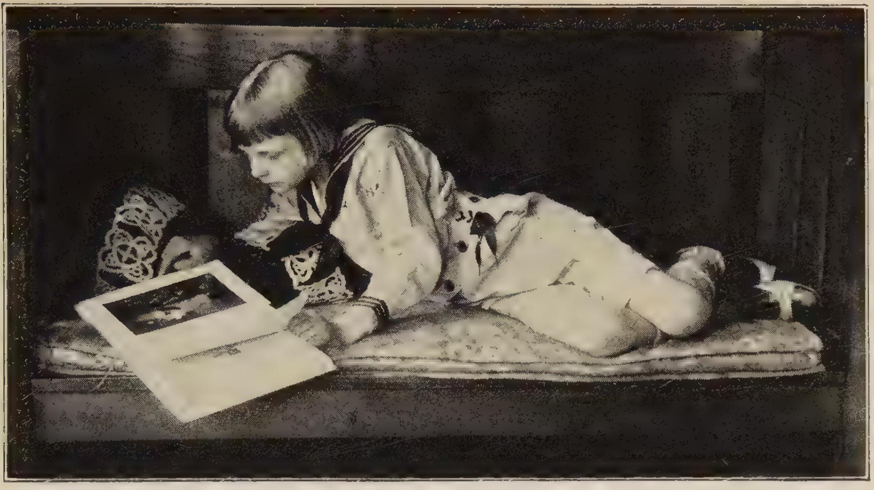
Thank you, dear Heavenly Father, for the good things you have given us.

Thank you for the wind and sun and rain, for all your many workers have done, and most of all for our dear parents.

"Thank-you" day is almost here, when all the people will think of God's loving care and thank him for it.

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord."

STORY FORTY



MY WISH

How can I show God how thankful I am, and how can I show God's love to others?

I am only a boy, but I can be a helper.

I want to begin now, so that I shall know how when I grow up.

I can always be happy and cheerful.

When mother needs an errand boy, I know I can help her.

I can be sure to hang up all my clothes.

And I can always put away my playthings when I am through playing.

I shall try never to ask father or mother to do anything for me that I can do for myself.

A Prayer

I come, a little child,
And I would work for Thee:
Lord, help me serve Thee as I should,
And faithful may I be.

Though but a little child,
Yet have I eyes to see:
Lord, open them to everything
That I may do for Thee.

My hands and feet are Thine:
And Thou hast need of them,
As forth I go to seek the right,
And tides of wrong to stem.

Thy little child, I come,
To aid and to befriend,
To gladden others, if I may,
Until my life shall end.

—A. D. Salisbury

STORY FORTY-ONE

RUTH'S BIRTHDAY

Today is Ruth's birthday.

We all love Ruth, so we like to give her presents on her birthday.

Some of our friends are coming to our house after school, and we will have a birthday party for Ruth.

Mother made her a beautiful big birthday cake with white frosting on it.

It has six pink candles on it, too, because Ruth is six years old.

Her birthday comes the first of December.

Mother says the whole world will celebrate another birthday this month.

Can you guess whose birthday it is?

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

STORY FORTY-TWO

CHRISTMAS IS HERE

Hurrah! Christmas is here again.

Now the boys and girls will be happy.

Ruth and I both got some presents, and we each gave one to father and mother.

Ruth got a dress and a new doll.

I got an engine and a train of cars.

We have a big Christmas tree, too.
The boys came over to see my engine.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

This wonderful tree with its branches wide
Bears many a gift for the Christmas-tide.

"Mother, why do we have Christmas?"

"It is Christ's birthday, my dear.

Correggio

THE BABY JESUS

Christ showed us the love of God.

Our love for each other is very much like God's love for us.

When people are kind to each other, they show God's love.

Jesus showed God's love better than any one else ever did.

So, on his birthday we want to show love to everybody.

That is why we give each other presents.

Presents that carry the most love are those we make ourselves or those we buy with money we work for and earn."

"Mother, I want to give some presents.

Will you help me plan how to do it?"

Once a lovely, shining star,
Seen by shepherds from afar,
Gently moved until its light
Made a manger-cradle bright.

There a darling baby lay
Pillowed soft upon the hay.
And his mother sang and smiled,
"This is Christ, the holy child."
— Lydia Avery Coonley Ward

"Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace, good will toward men."

JESUS AND HIS MOTHER
From a painting by Nicolas Mignard

God sent us this loving Baby
From His home in heaven above.
He came down to show all people
How to help and how to love.

STORY FORTY-THREE

WHY THE WORLD IS GLAD

"Father, please tell us how Jesus is God's best gift of love."

"Do you remember that you once wondered why Julia's family were suffering, when they were trying so hard?"

"Yes, father, is it because people are selfish?"

"Just so. But often it is because people are ignorant, too, and do not know the harm they do. Many know, and do not care. Others want to help the world to be happy, but do not know how.

These things have troubled wise men and good men ever since the world began.

Many of them talked with God about it. So God promised to send them One who would show them the way to make the world kind and happy.

Long, long ago men looked for this Promised One of God. And then Jesus came, and ever since there has been rejoicing over all the world, because he taught us to help others as we would like to be helped ourselves. When all people learn to do this, no one will need to suffer. That is why the world is glad."

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son."

JESUS BLESSING THE CHILDREN
From a painting by Heinrich Hofmann

STORY FORTY–FOUR

WHAT JESUS DID FOR US

"How did Jesus show God's love?" asked Ruth.

"Jesus, first of all, grew up, as God would have him grow up, strong and thoughtful and obedient and kind.

He often talked with God alone, so as to know what God wanted him to do. Then he was always careful to do it.

When Jesus became a man, he gave up everything to go about the country teaching people about God. He loved little children and taught them.

It is easier for boys and girls to do right when they are little than to begin to try to do it after they are grown.

If little children learn to live as Jesus lived, when they grow up they can make the world happier.

This is why Jesus wants little children to love him, and be like him.

Now that you know how to read, you can read for yourself the other stories that tell what Jesus said and did."

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

THE BOY JESUS
From a painting by Murillo

MY SON

I have a little child—a son,
And I imagine he
Is something like the little boy
Christ used to be.

He waits on me so lovingly
With earnest eyes and sweet;
So willing and so eager are
His hands and feet.

I think the little Lord was glad
To serve His mother so,
And down the streets of Nazareth
On errands go.

And when my son has grown a man
Of strength and courtesy,
O Jesus, may he then as now
Resemble Thee.

—*Anne B. Payne*

PRAYERS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN

©Braun & Co.

THE MADONNA WEAVING
From a painting by Elisabeth Sonrel

THE FIRST PRAYER

I was in heaven one day when all the prayers
Came in, and angels bore them up the stairs.
They were like to flowers of various bloom,
And a divinest fragrance filled the room.

Then did I see how the great sorter chose
One flower that seemed to me a hedgling rose,
And from the tangled press
Of that irregular lovelines
Set it apart; and—"This," I heard him say,
"Is for the Master"; so upon his way
He would have passed; then I to him:
"Whence is this rose, O thou of cherubim
The chiefest?" "Knowest thou not?" he said,
and smiled,
"This is the first prayer of a little child."

—*Thomas E. Brown*

By courtesy of Taber Prang Art Co.

MORNING PRAYER
From a painting by K. Storch

MORNING PRAYERS

When the little child awaketh,
He should think of God in Heaven,
And softly say, "I thank Thee, Lord,
For the sleep which Thou hast given."

He reverently kneeleth
Beside his little bed.
With closèd eyes and humble voice
His holy prayers are said.

He goeth from his chamber
To his work or to his play,
But the prayers that he hath prayèd,
He must keep in mind all day.

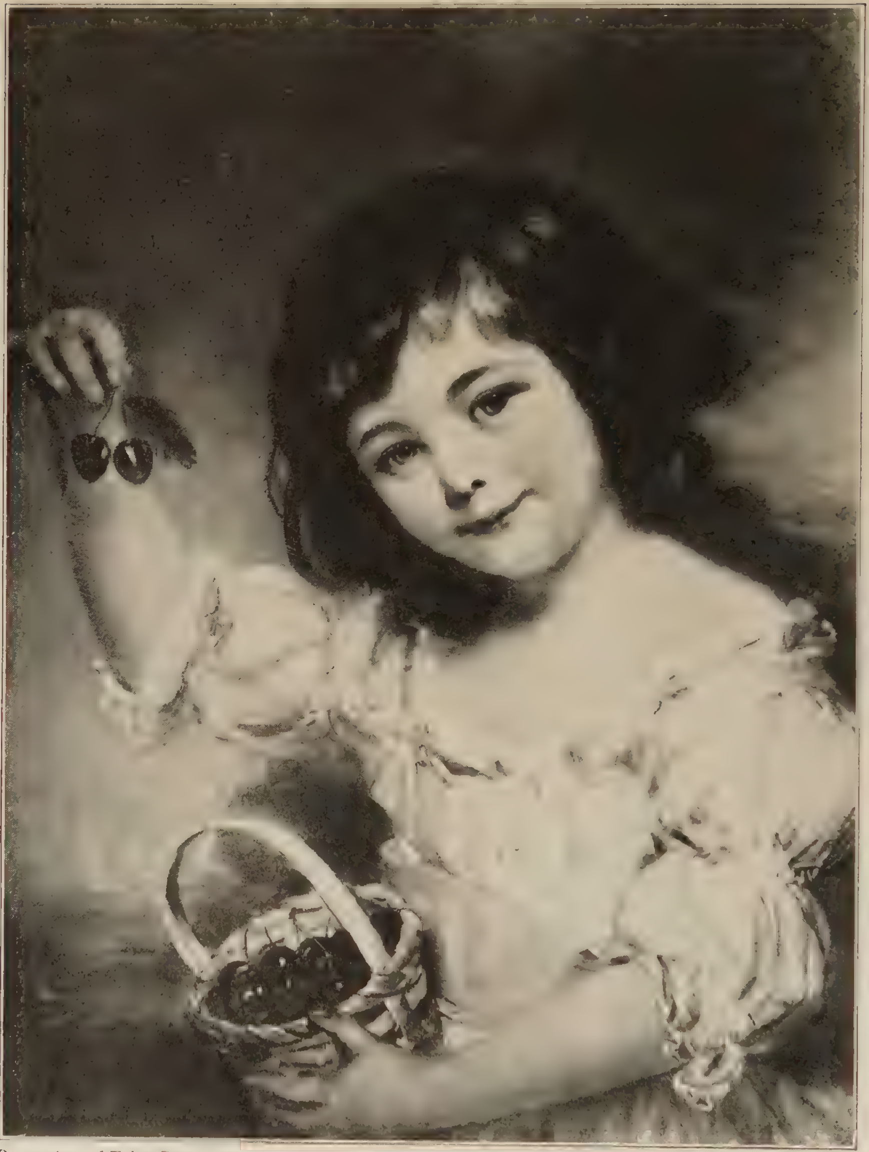
—*From an old poem*

For this new morning with its light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food, for love and friends,
For everything thy goodness sends,
We thank Thee, Heavenly Father.

—*Ozora S. Davis*

Dear Jesus, look down from above,
And fill my little heart with love;
Bless me every single day,
And make me sweet and good alway.

Keep my little voice today,
Keep it gentle while I play;
Keep my hands from doing wrong,
Keep my feet the whole day long;
Keep me all, O Jesus mild,
Keep me ever, Thy dear child.



By courtesy of Taber Prang Art Co.

GIRL WITH CHERRIES
From a painting by John Russell

Father, we look to Thee, and pray
That Thou wilt guide us through this day.
From all wrongdoing keep us free;
May we Thy loving children be.

MATERNAL CARES
From a painting by Jozef Israels

Father, we thank Thee for the night
And for the pleasant morning light;
For rest and food and loving care,
And all that makes the day so fair.
Help us to do the things we should,
To be to others kind and good;
In all we do, in work or play,
To grow more loving every day.

—*Rebecca J. Weston*

©Curtis & Cameron

"HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER THEE"
From a painting by W. L. Taylor

Father dear, I fain would thank Thee
For my long, refreshing sleep,
And the watch that Thou didst keep,
O'er Thy child so lovingly.
All that I today am doing
Help me, Lord, to do for Thee.
May I kind and helpful be,
Try to serve Thee faithfully.

For our quiet sleep all night,
Watched by stars above us bright,
For the gladness of the morn
And the laugh of earth reborn,
Praise and thanks to Thee we give,
Father in whose love we live!

For Thy world of creatures fed
By the gift of daily bread,
For the tones and faces dear,
Making homes of joy and cheer,
Praise and thanks to Thee we give,
Father in whose love we live!
—*W. C. Gannett*

Lord, I thank Thee for the night,
And the pleasant morning light,
For rest and food and loving care,
And all that makes the day so fair.
Help me, Lord, to love Thee more
Than I ever loved before;
In my work and in my play
Be Thou with me through the day.

©Curtis & Cameron

OUR DAILY BREAD

From a painting by Ernest Fosbery

It's dinner time; I'm at my place,
With napkin tucked beneath my chin.
My plate is filled, I've said my grace;
I'm ready to begin.

PRAYERS AT TABLE

Forbid that we, like beast and bird,
Our daily hunger satisfy
Without a thankful thought or word
To Him who doth our needs supply.

May we who know God's constant care
And feel His presence near,
Express in simple, earnest prayer
Our gratitude sincere.

—*G. I. Liland*

Heavenly Father, bless this food,
To Thy glory and our good.

God is great, and God is good,
And we thank Him for this food.
By His hand must all be fed;
Give us, Lord, our daily bread.

—*Gerrit Verkuyl*

O give thanks unto the Lord; for
He is good;
For His mercy endureth forever;
Who giveth food to all flesh:
For His mercy endureth forever.

—*Psalm 136:1, 25*

We offer thanks to Thee, O Lord,
For this our daily food;
May we in thought and deed and word,
Show forth our gratitude.

—*C. P. Arden*

ASKING THE BLESSING
From a painting by Von Bremen

For health and strength and daily food
We thank Thee, Giver of all good.
Hear Thou the simple prayer we make:
Bless all who of this meal partake.
—*Emma Ball*

Before we eat the food prepared,
O God, we bow our heads to Thee.
May we from every ill be spared
And for Thy blessings grateful be.

Bless those who for our needs provide,
That we may happy be.
Bless all who in this home abide,
And may we use our strength for Thee.

—*W. Alter*

Lord Jesus, be our holy Guest,
Our morning Joy, our evening Rest;
And with our daily bread impart
Thy love and peace to every heart.

O grant Thy blessing, God, to rest
Upon this meal to make it blest.
And help us all to feel how good
Thou art to give us daily food.

—*J. Vinson Stephens*

Here a little child I stand:
Feed me with Thy loving hand.
Let a heavenly blessing fall
On our meat and on us all.

—*Adapted from Herrick*

We come with thanks to Thee
For this, our daily bread,
And for Thy blessings everywhere
To all Thy children spread.

EVENING PRAYERS

When softly brooding dark comes down
And starry lamps shine overhead,
When over all the restless town
The peaceful wing of night is spread,
Within the houses safe and warm
The little children climb the stair;
And folded safe from want and harm,
They kneel and say their bedtime prayer.

—*Lillias C. Nevin*

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep.
Thy love be with me through the night,
And bless me with the morning light.

Now I lay me down to rest;
Angels guard me in my nest.
Heavenly Father care for me
Like the wee birds in the tree.
Glad and well may I awake
And this I ask for Jesus' sake.

Now I lay me down to sleep;
Heavenly Father, wilt Thou keep
Me and those I love all night,
For with Thee 'tis always light.

And, dear Father, while I share
In Thy tender love and care,
Help me every day to be
An obedient child to Thee.

—*Henrietta R. Eliot*

By courtesy of Taber Prang Art Co.

EVENING PRAYER

From a painting by K. Storch

MADONNA AND CHILD

From a painting by Murillo

Lord, help me every day
To love Thee more and more,
And try to do Thy will
Much better than before.

We fold our hands that we may be
From all our play and work set free;
We bow our heads as we draw near
The King of kings, our Father dear;
We close our eyes that we may see
Nothing to take our thoughts from Thee.
Into our hearts we pray Thee come,
And may they each become Thy home;
Cast out the sin and make us free,
Pure like the Christ Child may we be;
This is the prayer we bring to Thee.
Then raise our eyes Thy light to see,
Lift up our heads to praise Thee still,
Open our hands to do Thy will.

Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me,
Bless Thy little lamb tonight.
Through the darkness be Thou near me,
Keep me safe till morning light.

All this day Thy hand has led me,
And I thank Thee for Thy care.
Thou hast clothed me, warmed and fed me,
Listen to my evening prayer:

Let my sins be all forgiven!
Bless the friends I love so well!
Take me when I die to heaven,
Happy there with Thee to dwell.

—*Mary Lundie Duncan*

QUIET NIGHT

My Father, hear my prayer
　　Before I go to rest;
It is Thy little child
　　That cometh to be blessed.
Forgive me all my sin,
　　And let me sleep this night
In safety and in peace
　　Until the morning light.

©Braun & Co.

INNOCENCE

From a painting by W. A. Bouguereau

THE SMILING BOY

From a painting by Gherardo dalle Notti

In my work and in my play,
Kindly through another day
Thou hast led me on my way.
All the good the day has brought me,
Every lesson it has taught me,
Thankful for it would I be:
It is all Thy gift to me.
Through this nighttime, while I sleep,
Thou Thy kindly watch wilt keep.

—*J. T. Sunderland*

Lord, when we have not any light,
And mothers are asleep,
Then through the stillness of the night
Thy little children keep.

When shadows haunt the quiet room,
Help us to understand
That Thou art with us through the gloom,
To hold us by the hand.

And though we do not always see
The holy angels near,
O may we trust ourselves to Thee,
Nor have one foolish fear.

So in the morning may we wake,
When wakes the kindly sun,
More loving for our Father's sake,
To each unloving one.

—*Annie Matheson*

ADORING ANGELS
From a painting by Filippino Lippi

While sinks the weary world to rest,
May gentle sleep our eyelids close;
And through the quiet hours of night,
Lord, grant us sweet repose.
—*C. P. Arden*

The toils of day are over;
I lift my heart to Thee:
And ask that free from peril
The hours of dark may be.
O Jesus, make their darkness light,
And guard me through the coming night.

EVENING

When all the birds are fast asleep,
In nests of countless number,
Thy watch above Thy children keep
Who slumber.

When shepherds in the sunset lands
Their wearied flocks are folding,
Then may Thy hands, O Lord, our hands
Be holding.

God, that madest earth and heaven,
Darkness and light!
Who the day for toil hast given,
For rest the night,

May Thine angel guards defend us,
Slumber sweet Thy mercy send us,
Holy dreams and hopes attend us,
This livelong night!

—*From "Family Prayers," Lyman Abbott*

THE MOTHER OF JESUS WHEN A LITTLE GIRL

From a painting by H. J. Sinkel

O-169

MADONNA

From a painting by Cuno Bodenhausen

PRAYERS IN CHURCH

Hark! the church bell's pleasant sound;
Let us go, my child,
There, where every Sunday morn
Rings the summons mild.

Through the lofty windows there
Rainbow light is streaming fair;
From the doors, wide-open thrown,
Peals the organ's solemn tone.

"Come!" says the silver bell,
"Come!" where the voices tell
Of the God, that dwells above,
Of the God, whose name is love.

—*Laura E. Richards*

Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.

—*Psalm 51:10*

Gracious Lord, we look to Thee;
Meek and reverent may we be;
May we love the hour of prayer,
In its worship gladly share;
Love Thy holy day and place,
Where we learn to seek Thy face.

–*From an old prayer*

Heavenly Father, I Thy child
Come to worship here.
In my simple songs and prayer
Teach me, Lord, to be sincere.

—*G. I. Liland*

One thing have I desired of the Lord,
That will I seek after;
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the Lord.
And to inquire in His temple.

—*Psalm 27:4*

Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house,
And the place where Thine honor dwelleth.

—*Psalm 26:8*

O Lord, open Thou my lips,
And my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

—*Psalm 51:15*

This is the day the Lord hath made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

-*Psalm 118:24*

I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord.

—*Psalm 122:1*

The Lord is in His holy temple;
Let all the earth keep silence before Him.

—*Habakkuk 2:20*

We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God,
In the midst of thy temple.

—*Psalm 48:9*

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Lord, help me live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way,
That even when I kneel to pray,
My prayer may be for others.
—*Charles D. Meigs*

LITTLE CHILDREN ON THE SEASHORE
From a painting by Jozef Israels

Our loving Heavenly Father,
  Now hear us as we pray
For all the little children
  Both near and far away.
We ask Thee for Thy blessing
  For each one every day:
Help us to love each other,
  And for each other pray.

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS
From a painting by Gabriel Max

O Father, hear our evening prayer,
And shed Thy blessing everywhere,
On every little child; on each Thy weary child.
The heavy eyelids close,
Give them sleep and sweet repose.

And if there be some dreams to spare,
Oh, send them with Thy loving care
To those who have been good, to all who have been good.
And to the poor and small
Send the fairest dreams of all.

O Father, hear our evening prayer,
And bless Thy children everywhere,
Bless every living thing, each tiny living thing,
Thy creatures great and small,
For we know Thou lovest them all.

—*Abbie Farwell Brown*

THREE LITTLE CHILDREN
From a painting by Sir Anthony Van Dyck

For friends and neighbors do we pray;
For parents good who every day
Show us their loving care.

For those who lack what we enjoy,
For every needy girl and boy,
A blessing, Lord, prepare.

For children far beyond the sea,
For all who do not know of Thee,
Hear, Lord, our humble prayer.

—*W. Alter*

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING

Of all the many, many gifts
We long so to possess,
The one that is the best is this,
The gift of thankfulness.

Of all the blessings we receive
Which happiness impart,
The one which brings real joy is this,
Thanksgiving in the heart.

—*G. I. Liland*

We thank Thee, Heavenly Father,
    For food and home and friends,
For sunshine and for flowers,
    For all that Thy love sends.

Holy Father, we would thank Thee,
    For this day and all Thy care;
Now accept the love we bring Thee,
    Father, hear our evening prayer.

For life and health and strength
    We thank the Father kind;
We cannot count His mercies o'er,
    So many gifts we find.

The wee bird has its nest,
    Safe in the tree so tall.
For birdlings' nest, for children's homes,
    We thank the Lord for all.

—*M. R. Hofer*

AUTUMN
From a painting by Millet

The bounteous harvest that we see,
Harvest of fruit, from plant and tree,
Harvest of wheat, from field and plain,
Thou gavest us through sun and rain.

Giver of all, oh, may we be
Filled with thanksgiving unto Thee.
Oh, may we lift to Thee above
Our hearts in praise, our hearts in love.
—*A. D. Salisbury*

I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart:
And I will glorify Thy name forevermore. —*Psalm 86:12*

GIVING THANKS
From a painting by Filippino Lippi

Dear Father in heaven, we thank Thee today
For food and for clothing, for work and for play.
Now help us all gladly to do what is right,
And bring us in health to our bedtime tonight.
—*From "At Mother's Knee"*

PLAYING WITH DOLLY
From a painting by John W. Alexander

When I put my dolly to bed at night,
She closes her eyes, and shuts them tight;
But when she sits up, I wish you could see
How she opens her eyes and looks at me.

SPECIAL PRAYERS

It matters not what it may be
Our hearts yearn to express;
We know that God is good, and He
Our simple faith will bless.

It matters not where we may go,
For God is everywhere,
And in His love for us we know
That He will hear our prayer.

—*W. Alter*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name,
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
And the power,
And the glory forever. Amen.

FOR SUNDAY EVENING

Thanks we give Thee, Heavenly Father,
For this day so glad and bright;
Now that evening shadows gather,
Guard us safely through the night;
When the morning wakes in beauty,
Waken us to love and duty.

—*J. T. Sunderland*

PLAYTIME
From a photograph by H. R. Pott

For Home

O Father, be Thou near,
Be near, I pray,
The house that shelters me;
Guard it alway.

O Father, keep this house
A loving home,
An oft-remembered place
In years to come.

Make it a sacred shrine
Of family joy,
Where all are truly blest
In Thy employ.

—*A. D. Salisbury*

AT PLAY

Be with me, Lord, throughout this day,
Make me unselfish in my play;
May I in all my work and fun
Do what I know Thou wouldst have done.

If tempted unkind words to say,
May I at once remember Thee
And unto others do alway
As I would have them do to me.

—G. I. Liland

THE SABBATH DAY

This Holy Day is Thine,
And may I keep it free
For everything that Thou hast bid
A holy day to be.

Grant, Father, that Thy church,
Thy sacred house below,
May draw me with its hallowed joy,
And teach me Thee to know.

Grant that some kindly deed
May cheer the hours today,
Some helpful act, some blessing brought
To those for whom we pray.

This Holy Day is Thine,
Make mine the happy part
To reverence it and cherish it:
Enshrine it in my heart!

—A. D. Salisbury

THE SISTINE MADONNA

From a painting by Raphael

THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT

Dear Angel! ever at my side,
How loving must thou be
To leave thy home in heaven to guard
A little child like me!

Thy beautiful and shining face
I see not, though so near;
The sweetness of thy soft, low voice
I am too deaf to hear.

And when, dear Spirit! I kneel down
Morning and night to prayer,
Something there is within my heart
Which tells me thou art there.

Yes! when I pray, thou prayest too—
Thy prayer is all for me;
But when I sleep, thou sleepest not,
But watchest patiently.

—*Frederick W. Faber*

FOR THE ABSENT ONE

God bless thee, absent loved one;
God keep thee 'neath His care;
God guard thee from all danger;
God guide thee everywhere.

IN TIME OF TROUBLE

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore will we not fear.

—*Psalm 46:1*

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

From a painting by Murillo

THE BIRTHDAY OF JESUS
From a painting by F. A. Stüler
By permission of the Berlin Photographic Co.

For Christmas Sunday

O Father, may we seek Thy face
Upon this sacred day.
Within Thy hallowed shrine and place,
There may we praise and pray.

As there the organ's lofty tone
Peals out the Christ Child's birth,
May our glad praises reach Thy throne,
And swell the song on earth.

The reverent prayer, the preachèd word,
The church's festal glow,
The wondrous Christmas story heard
From out the long ago.

May these inspire in every heart
The spirit that is Thine,
The spirit that would aye impart
The Christmas love divine.

—*A. D. Salisbury*

A Birthnight Prayer

O God, here by my bedside white
I kneel upon my birthday night,
To thank Thee for this happiest day
Of gifts and games, of love and play.

I do not know what mercies Thou
Hast planned for me a year from now,
But then I hope its sunset mild
May find me still a thankful child.

Help me, my Father, this new year
To be to those I love more dear,
Ever to have a morning face,
And live unto Thy love and grace.

For the New Year

The Old Year now is past and gone;
    O Lord, wilt Thou be near,
And guide and bless us every one
    Throughout the long New Year.

—*W. Alter*

SHIPS IN HARBOR
From a painting by Edward Moran

On Awaking at Night

Though I speak and no one answers
In the quiet of the night,
Though I look, and through the blackness
Cannot see one gleam of light;

Still I know there's One who seeth,
In the night as in the day,
For to Him the darkness dreary
Is as bright as noontide ray.

Then I'll turn and sleep more soundly
When one little prayer I've prayed,
For there's nothing in the darkness
That should make a child afraid.

—*C. Frances Alexander*

FIRST POEMS AND BIBLE VERSES

THE MOTHER OF GOOD CHILDREN
From a painting by Ford Madox Brown

THE TORN HAT

From a painting by Sully

OBEY YOUR PARENTS

My son, hear the instruction of thy father,
And forsake not the law of thy mother;
For they shall be an ornament of grace unto
thy head,
And chains about thy neck.

—*Proverbs 1:8-9*

Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.

—*Proverbs 22:6*

Children, obey your parents in all things;
For this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

—*Colossians 3:20*

Good little boys should never say,
"I will," and "Give me these";
O no! that never is the way,
But "Mother, if you please."

—*Elizabeth Turner*

If you're told to do a thing,
And mean to do it really,
Never let it be by halves;
Do it fully, freely!

Do not make a poor excuse,
Waiting, weak, unsteady;
All obedience worth the name
Must be prompt and ready.

—*Phoebe Cary*

TWO CHERUBS
From a painting by Caravaggio

ALWAYS BE CHEERFUL

Take therefore no thought for the morrow,
For the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.
—Matthew 6:34

Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat
Nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.
Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all
these things.
—Matthew 6:25, 32

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.
—Proverbs 17:22

One step and then another,
And the longest walk is ended;
One stitch and then another,
And the largest rent is mended.

One brick upon another,
And the highest wall is made;
One flake upon another,
And the deepest snow is laid.

Then do not look disheartened
On the work you have to do,
And say that such a mighty task
You never can get through;

But just endeavor day by day
Another point to gain,
And soon the mountain which you feared
Will prove to be a plain.

BE KIND TO OTHERS

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat,
And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:
For thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head,
And the Lord shall reward thee.

—*Proverbs 25:21*

Have you had a kindness shown?
Pass it on!
'Twas not given for thee alone,
Pass it on!
Let it travel down the years,
Let it wipe another's tears,
Till in heaven the deed appears—
Pass it on!

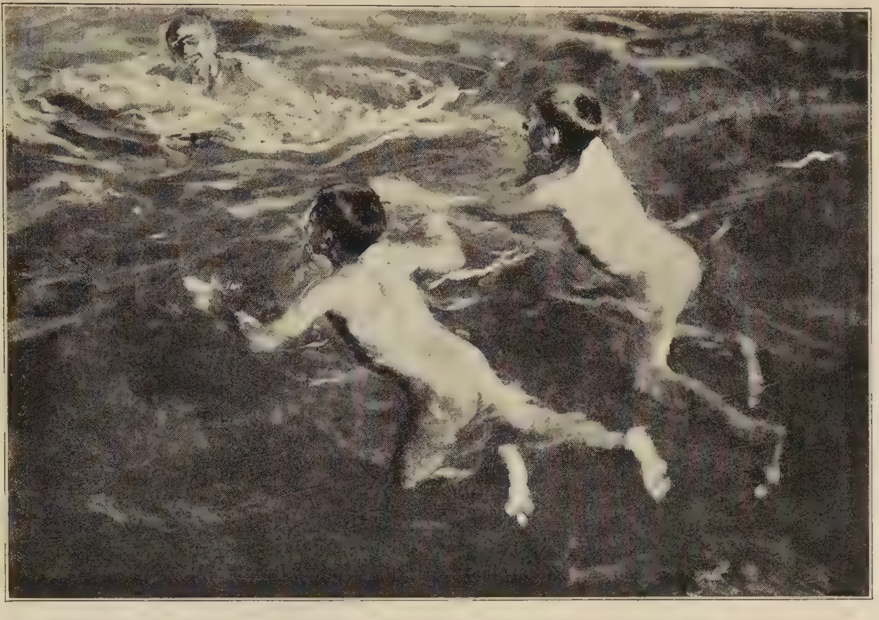
—*Henry Burton*

GRANDMOTHER'S TREASURE
From a painting by Jozef Israels

Little deeds of kindness,
  Little words of love,
Help to make earth happy,
  Like the heaven above.
—*Julia Fletcher Carney*

Kind hearts are the garden,
Kind thoughts are the roots,
Kind words are the blossoms,
Kind deeds are the fruits.

Be ye kind one to another.
—*Ephesians 4:32*



THE SWIMMERS
From a painting by Sorolla

LEARN TO BE HAPPY

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance.
He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.
—*Proverbs 15:13, 15*

The world's a very happy place,
  Where every child should dance and sing,
And always have a smiling face,
  And never sulk at anything.
—*Gabriel Setoun*

The world is so full of a number of things,
I am sure we should all be as happy as kings.
—*Robert Louis Stevenson*

PLAYING IN THE SAND

Happy hearts and happy faces,
Happy play in grassy places—
That was how, in ancient ages,
Children grew to kings and sages.
—*Robert Louis Stevenson*

Jog on, jog on the footpath way,
And merrily hent the stile-a;
A merry heart goes all the way,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.
—*Shakespeare*

Better is little with the fear of the Lord,
Than great treasure and trouble therewith.
—*Proverbs 15:16*

BE KIND TO EVERY LIVING THING

Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

—*Luke 6:36*

The merciful man doeth good to his own soul,
But he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.

—*Proverbs 11:17*

©*Rau Art Studios*

PRETTY LITTLE PUSSIES

I like little Pussy,
    Her coat is so warm,
And if I don't hurt her
    She'll do me no harm.
She shall sit by my side,
    And I'll give her some food;
And she'll love me because
    I am gentle and good.

—*Jane Taylor*

TRUE LOVE

From a painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence

Little children, never give
Pain to things that feel and live.
Let the gentle robin come
For the crumbs you save at home.
As his food you throw along
He'll repay you with a song.

Every beast of the forest is mine,
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.
I know all the fowls of the mountains,
And the wild beasts of the field are mine.
—*Psalm 50:10, 11*

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father.
—*Matthew 10:29*

STAND FOR THE RIGHT

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
—*Romans 12:21*

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
And he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.
—*Proverbs 16:32*

Not the things that I like to do,
But the things that are right to do;
Not everything that I want to do,
But whatever I ought to do.

Who says, "I will" to what is right,
"I won't" to what is wrong,
Although a tender little child,
Is truly great and strong.

THE DIVINE CHILD

From a painting by Murillo

SPEAK THE TRUTH

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man
truth with his neighbor. —*Ephesians 4:25*

The lip of truth shall be established forever;
But a lying tongue is but for a moment.
—*Proverbs 12:19*

Righteous lips are the delight of kings;
And they love him that speaketh right.
—*Proverbs 16:13*

He that speaketh truth showeth forth
righteousness. —*Proverbs 12:17*

He who speaks with lying tongue
Adds to wrong a greater wrong.
Then with courage true and strong
Always speak the truth.

Truth is honest, truth is sure;
Truth is strong and must endure;
If thou wert wrong, be still the same—
Speak the truth and bear the blame.

When at once the truth you've told,
Away with all your sadness;
The sense of having done what's right
Must fill the heart with gladness.

By courtesy of Taber Prang Art Co

BAREFOOT BOY

From a painting by Eastman Johnson

KEEP ON TRYING

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?
When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
—*Proverbs 6:9*

Go to the ant, thou sluggard,
Consider her ways and be wise.
—*Proverbs 6:6*

Early to bed and early to rise,
Is the way to be healthy, wealthy and wise.

'Tis a lesson you should heed,
Try, try again;
If at first you don't succeed,
Try, try again.
Then your courage should appear,
For, if you will persevere,
You will conquer, never fear—
Try, try again.

If you've tried and have not won,
Never stop for crying;
All that's great and good is done
Just by patient trying.

Though young birds, in flying, fall,
Still their wings grow stronger;
And the next time they can keep
Up a little longer.

Though the sturdy oak has known
Many a blast that bowed her,
She has risen again, and grown
Loftier and prouder.

If by easy work you beat,
Who the more will prize you?
Gaining victory from defeat,
That's the test that tries you!
—*Phoebe Cary*

DO YOUR BEST

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.
—*Ecclesiastes 9:10*

And isn't it, my boy or girl,
The wisest, bravest plan,
Whatever comes, or doesn't come,
To do the best you can?

Work while you work,
Play while you play;
This is the way
To be happy and gay.
All that you do,
Do with your might;
Things done by halves
Are never done right.

Whene'er a task is set for you,
Don't idly sit and view it—
Nor be content to wish it done;
Begin at once and do it.

DO YOUR WORK WELL

Let every man take heed how he buildeth.

—*I Corinthians 3:10*

A wise man built his house upon the rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. —*Matthew 7:24, 25*

We are building every day
In a good or evil way,
And the structure as it grows
Will our inmost self disclose.
It may grow a castle grand
Or a wreck upon the sand.

Build it well, whate'er you do,
Build it straight and strong and true,
Build it clean and high and broad,
Build it for the eye of God.

If a task is once begun,
Never leave it till it's done;
Be the labor great or small,
Do it well or not at all.

Do whate'er you have to do
With a true and earnest zeal;
Bend your sinews to the task—
Put your shoulders to the wheel.

GROUP OF ANGELS
From a painting by Sir Anthony Van Dyck

SPEAK LOVING WORDS

Even a child is known by his doings,
Whether his work be pure and whether it is right.
—*Proverbs 20:11*

Pleasant words are as a honeycomb,
Sweet to the soul.
—*Proverbs 16:24*

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches,
And loving favor rather than silver and gold.
—*Proverbs 22:1*

©*Braun & Co.*

THE CHILD JESUS
From a painting by Dagnan-Bouveret

A little child may have a loving heart,
    Most dear and sweet,
    And willing feet.
A little child may have a happy hand,
    Full of kind deeds
    For many needs.

A talebearer revealeth secrets,
But he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.
—*Proverbs 11:13*

IN THE NAZARETH HOME
From a painting by Charles Le Brun

A child should always say what's true,
And speak when he is spoken to,
And behave mannerly at table;
At least as far as he is able.
—Robert Louis Stevenson

Hearts, like doors, will ope with ease
To very, very little keys;
And don't forget that two of these
Are "I thank you" and "If you please."

BE HELPFUL

O what can little hands do
To please the King of Heaven?
The little hands some work may try
To help the poor in misery:
Such grace to mine be given,
Such grace to mine be given.

O what can little lips do
To please the King of Heaven?
The little lips can praise and pray,
And gentle words of kindness say;
Such grace to mine be given,
Such grace to mine be given.

O what can little eyes do
To please the King of Heaven?
The little eyes can upward look,
And learn to read God's holy book;
Such grace to mine be given,
Such grace to mine be given.

O what can little hearts do
To please the King of Heaven?
Our hearts, if God His spirit send,
Can love and trust their Saviour Friend:
Such grace to mine be given,
Such grace to mine be given.

Though small is all that we can do
To please the King of Heaven,
When hearts, and hands, and lips unite
To serve the Saviour with delight,
They are most precious in His sight:
Such grace to mine be given.

A LITTLE GIRL AND HER SHEEP
From a painting by Stefano Bruzzio

I asked the little joyous bird
Who taught him how to fly,
And sing his songs so sweetly in
The bright blue morning sky;
He told me it was God above,
Who gave to him his wing,
And taught him how to build his nest,
And taught him how to sing.

I asked the little lovely flower
That grew beneath my feet,
Who dressed her in her velvet coat
And gave her fragrance sweet;
She told me it was God above,
Who clothed her with such care,
And taught her how to sweetly breathe
Upon the evening air.

I asked the little twinkling star
Who taught him how to shine,

©*Publishers' Photo Service*

FEEDING THE PUPPIES

And run his course so steadily
    Along his proper line;
He told me it was God above,
    Who bade him shine so bright,
And trim his little tiny lamp
    To cheer the winter night.

Since all things, then, look up to God—
    The flower, the star, the bird;
And all obey His holy laws,
    And listen to His word;
I, too, although a child, will try
    His bidding to obey,
That I may learn to please Him, too,
    And serve as well as they.

How many deeds of kindness
  A little child may do,
Although it has so little strength
  And little wisdom too.

It wants a loving spirit,
  Much more than strength, to prove
How many things a child may do
  For others by its love.

—*Fanny Van Alstyne*

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits ye shall know them. —*Matthew 7:16*

©Curtis & Cameron

READING

NEW TESTAMENT STORIES

By Caroline Kellogg

THE STORY OF JESUS

God has given us a Book full of stories,
Which was made for His people of old.
It begins with the tale of a Garden,
And ends with the City of Gold.
But the best is the story of Jesus,
Of the Babe with the ox in the stall,
Of the song that was sung by the Angels,
The most beautiful story of all.

There are stories for parents and children,
For the old who are ready to rest,
But for all who can read them or listen
The story of Jesus is best.
For it tells how He came from the Father,
His far-away children to call,
To bring the lost sheep to the Shepherd,
The most beautiful story of all.

©Braun, Clement & Co.

THE PRAYER OF THE CHILD JESUS

From a painting by Elizabeth Sonrel

WHAT THE STARS SAW

ONCE upon a time, long, long ago, the stars came out in the sky just as they will do tonight. Looking down upon the earth to see what was happening, they peeped into many homes and saw fathers and mothers and children having happy times together. But in some of the homes mothers and children were a bit lonely. Their fathers were shepherds and were far away on the hills keeping watch over their flocks by night. They sat together on the ground, and while they watched their sheep they talked. Those same twinkling stars that watch us by night looked down upon them and listened while they talked.

Sometimes they talked about their homes and their little children. Sometimes they talked softly about their cruel king and of how poor the shepherds were, and wished that God would send to them the King he had promised long ago.

One of the younger shepherds said:

"Perhaps God has forgotten."

But the oldest of all the shepherds said:

"No, no, God never forgets. In his own good time he will send us our King. Who knows, he might come tomorrow."

Tomorrow would have been Christmas for us, but the shepherds had never heard of Christmas. Indeed there had never been a Christmas in all the world; no Santa Claus, no stockings hung up, no Christmas trees, no Christmas gifts, no Christmas love, no Christmas bells to ring out on the winter air, no Christmas songs for little children to sing, no Christmas joy. For the blessed Christ Child, the dear Christmas Baby, the little Lord Jesus, brought all these things, and he had not yet come to earth.

While the shepherds watched their sheep and talked together and the stars looked down upon them, suddenly there shone

THE MESSENGER OF THE SHEPHERDS

From a painting by Paul Thumann

round about them a great and wonderful light that was brighter than starlight, brighter than moonlight, brighter even than the light of the sun in the daytime.. For Heaven's great gate had opened and the light from the throne of God shone out. Through the gate down to where the startled shepherds sat came a great, shining angel.

The frightened shepherds hid their faces on the ground; but when the angel spoke they were no longer afraid, for his face was sweet and tender as he said:

"Fear not, for I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people."

Eager for his glad tidings, they raised their heads to listen, and he told them wonderful news. It was that over in Bethlehem, across the field where they saw many lights twinkling and glimmering through the darkness, a little child was born who was to be their King and Saviour, come to take away their sorrow and their trouble. It was the Christ Child, born that night at Bethlehem.

The wonderful light grew brighter, Heaven's great gate opened wider, and many shining angels came out to sing the first glad Christmas song:

"Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good will to men."

As the simple shepherds there on the hillside listened, their hearts were filled with joy, the first Christmas joy the world had ever known.

The music grew softer and softer, for the angels had turned back toward Heaven. The strange light grew dimmer and dimmer, and at last the shepherds were alone in the darkness. Heaven's gate had closed. Quite still the shepherds stood waiting, hoping that the light and the angels would come to them again. When it did not come, the old, old shepherd said:

"Let us go to find him, the King the angels told us about. Just over there in Bethlehem they said we shall find him, born in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes."

MADONNA OF THE TEMPI HOUSE
From a painting by Raphael

Though he was old, he walked fast that night, and the other shepherds followed. Quickly they came to Bethlehem and they found the Baby Jesus, not in a palace where kings were wont to be born, not even in a comfortable home in a warm, soft bed like yours and mine, but in a manger where cattle are fed. It was a lowly place, but, oh, it was full of joy, for in it was the first Christmas gift, a Christmas gift for all the world, for the shepherds who came to find him, for you, and for me.

As shepherds sought Thy cradle, long ago,
Lord, may we seek Thy love divine to know.
And as the wise men brought their offering,
So we our lives to Thee would gladly bring.

GLORY IN THE HIGHEST
From a painting by Catherine Weekes

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
—*From Luther's "Cradle Hymn"*

THE COMING OF THE WISE MEN
From a painting by Will H. Low

THE THREE WISE MEN

LONG, long ago some of the stars came out very early one night and looked about them, those very stars which you and I see in the sky every night. They looked about them, and then began to whisper to one another. "Look," they said, "there is a new star among us."

Low in the eastern sky God had hung a new light, bigger and brighter than any of the others.

Another star said, "See, there are men down there on the earth looking at that very star. They are wise men from the East. I can tell by their long white robes."

Far out on the brown, sandy desert were three men, riding on huge white camels, looking at the new star and talking about it. In their homes they had been watching and waiting for that star a long time. When at last they saw it shining in the sky, they said to one another, "Let us go. It will lead us to the great new King of all the earth."

Now they had come to the end of the first day's journey. They had found a well of sweet, cool water, and palm trees growing about it. Here they ate their supper, and fed their faithful camels. Here they slept while the stars watched. Very early in the morning, before it was quite light, they rose to see if the new star still shone in the east to lead them on. There it was, and when at the end of the day they stopped at another well of sweet, cool water far out upon the great brown desert, they looked eagerly for the first stars which came out after the golden sun had said "Good night," and there in the eastern sky shone the brightest star of all, and it seemed to say, "I am waiting for you. Come! Come!"

Another night, another day, another night, and yet another day, on and on and on the camels' long, strong legs carried them, until at last, with many other camels and many other

©Braun & Co.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT
From a painting by Amadée Buffet

travelers, they came to the gate of the beautiful old city of Jerusalem.

"Here," they said, "perhaps we shall find him whose star we have seen."

They rode up to the palace of King Herod and stopped. Each wise man made a queer little sound in his throat, and the camels understood. Very gently they doubled their long legs under them and knelt upon the ground, and the wise men stepped out of their strange-looking saddles that were something like tiny houses with curtains all about them. They went into the king's palace and asked of King Herod,

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him. We have come a long way. Can you tell us where to find him?"

But Herod said, "I have never heard of him. I am the king here."

So they started again upon their journey, and, lo, the star still shone and led them on.

Not far outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem is the little town of Bethlehem, and as the wise men upon their camels came near to it, the star hung very low, and seemed to lead them right into the little village.

"Shall we seek here?" said one. "It is such a poor little place. Who here would know anything about the great King of all the earth?"

But the others said, "The star has led us here. Let us stop."

They rode into the little town of Bethlehem, watching the star as they rode. Lower and lower it came to guide them until at last it stopped over a stable. Here, in a manger where cattle had been fed, they found a beautiful baby.

They were very, very wise men, and God himself had sent the star to guide them, and they knew that this little baby, born in a lowly manger, was Jesus, the great King of all the earth.

They laid out the costly presents they had brought to him, gold and frankincense and myrrh, and knelt before him and worshiped him.

The wise men bring to the Babe their gifts,
Christmas gifts, Christmas gifts;
His royal voice now in praise each lifts,
On Christmas day in the morning.
Our lives and our hearts at Thy feet we lay,
O spurn not the gift, Lord, we humbly pray.
Accept us, accept us, as we come this Christmas day.

THE BABY JESUS AND LITTLE CHILDREN
From a painting by Emanuel Dite

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

ONE night, long, long ago, the sun had just gone down. Very early two or three stars came out and looked down upon the earth before it was quite dark.

They saw a great many people gathered about a roadside well, men and women and little children and big brothers and sisters. Every one was busy. Some of the men were putting up tents, and some were feeding the donkeys and camels, and the boys were having lots of fun helping. The mothers were getting supper ready, and the girls were carrying water. It was to be out-of-doors like a picnic supper.

All these people were going on a long journey. Early in the morning they had started on this journey, and all day the boys had been having a gloriously good time. Sometimes they ran races, until they were far ahead of all the donkeys on which the mothers and very little children rode. Then they would throw themselves down by the roadside in the grass, all out of breath. While they rested, they laughed and talked and teased one another as boys like to do. "Aren't we having lots of fun?" they would say to one another; but you and I could not understand them, for they were little Hebrew children, and though I think the boys of that long-ago time thought and played much as boys do now, and perhaps said much the same things, they said them in a very different language.

These boys and all the people with them were going to Jerusalem. Some of the boys had never been there before. They were just twelve years old, and when a Hebrew boy was twelve, he went to Jerusalem, to the great temple there, and was examined in all that he had learned at school.

Day after day they traveled, and night after night they slept out under the stars. Every day they came up with other men and women and little children, all going to Jerusalem.

JOSEPH AND THE CHILD JESUS
From a painting by Murillo

At last they came to the great gate and went through into the city. A wonderful time the boys had there, visiting places they had heard their fathers and mothers tell about, seeing sights they had never even dreamed of, walking around the king's palace, and all going to the beautiful temple to take their examinations.

One of the boys was Jesus. He had gone to school in the town of Nazareth, where he lived, and now he was twelve years old and must go to the temple to be examined in all that he had learned at school.

One morning all the visitors went streaming out of the great gate, going home. Joseph and Jesus' mother and their relatives and friends and neighbors were all in the same company. At the end of the first day's journey Mary said, "I wonder where Jesus is." She went about among the other boys, Jesus' cousins and friends, but he was not with them. "We thought he was with you," they said, and Jesus' mother had thought he was with them. Joseph and Mary began to be worried. They asked every one in the company about Jesus, but no one remembered having seen him since they left Jerusalem.

Joseph and Mary went back to the city and inquired at the house where they had stayed, but Jesus was not there. They hunted for him everywhere, and at last they found him—where do you suppose? In the temple. There he was with the wise teachers who had examined him, but they were not teaching him. They were listening to the wise things he was telling them, and wondering how Jesus, who was only twelve years old, knew so much about God and God's Word.

Mary, his mother, could not understand either. She said, "Son, why did you not come with us when we started home? We have been anxious and worried about you, and have looked for you everywhere."

Jesus answered, "Knew ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" and still his mother and the wise men in the temple did not understand. But Mary knew that Jesus

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

From a painting by R. Leinweber

was her loving and obedient son: he left the wise teachers in the temple and went home to Nazareth with her and Joseph, and day by day grew bigger and wiser, just as you do. He was getting ready for his Father's business, which was to "save his people from their sins."

If we but learn to serve Him
While we are young and small,
Great things will find us ready
When we are grown up tall.

THE CHILD JOHN THE BAPTIST

From a bas-relief, School of Donatello

A HAPPY HOME

THE sun streamed through the windows of the workshop. Inside, in the pleasant sunlight, a man and a boy worked and talked together. Their tools were crude and the finished work was simple, but it was fashioned with loving care. One day it was a neighbor's chair or table they mended; another day they made plow handles. They made chests of sweet-smelling cedar and many other things the people of Nazareth needed.

Once the boy had been little and loved to watch the shavings curl from the plane; shining yellow ones from oak and pine, and red ones from the cedar. Or he played at building with the blocks of wood the man dropped upon the earthen floor. As he grew, he learned to handle the simple tools and to put the bits of wood together.

Sometimes his mother called to him to bring pieces of the wood into the little white house near the workshop. Sometimes she sent him to the well for water to fill the two great water jars which stood, one at either side of the doorway. Sometimes she asked him to mind the baby brothers and sisters that were growing up in the home. Always he was gentle and happy, doing his simple tasks cheerfully and learning day by day to do them a little better than the day before.

Sometimes he went to school. Down at the synagogue the teacher gathered the boys of the neighborhood together and taught them to write and to read and to know the laws of the great Jehovah.

Sometimes he went out from the little white house, past other white houses where his neighbors and playmates lived, through green rows of olive trees and through vineyards where the grapes hung purple and ripe. Of the many hills around the little city of Nazareth, where he lived, the highest was the

THE CHRIST CHILD AND ST. JOHN
From a bas-relief, School of Donatello

one he loved best to climb. Here he sat and looked away to other cities and higher mountains. One was always white with snow. Often he sat by the road that ran through Nazareth and watched long caravans of camels pass. It was the king's highway, and sometimes glittering troops of soldiers clattered by, some on foot and some riding spirited horses.

Later, the boy was big enough to stay all day in the shop and help the man with plane and saw and hammer, and as they worked they talked. The boy listened, and from the man's wisdom learned many things about the world in which they lived.

Sometimes he sat at evening with his beautiful mother outside the door of the little home, and together they talked of what his work in the world must be. No one else understood as did the mother that this little white house was not really the boy's home.

She knew he had only come here to grow up in her care, that his real home was in Heaven with God, his Father, and that God had sent him to be a Big Brother in the world and to help make people happy and good. For the man who worked in the shop was Joseph, and the beautiful mother was Mary, and the happy boy in the happy home was Jesus.

MADONNA OF THE SCALLOP SHELL

From a painting by Correggio

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

IN the long-ago time, in a far-away country, there came into the home of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, a wee baby girl. She came on a feast day, the day when all the people remembered how, once upon a time, the beautiful Queen Esther had saved their country from ruin.

"Because she came on this feast day," said Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, "we shall name our dear little baby girl Esther."

Little Esther was a sweet, good baby, and her father and mother loved her dearly and called her the sunshine of their home. They loved to watch her grow a little bigger and a little sweeter each day.

"Soon," they said, "our dear little baby girl will have a tooth."

And sure enough, one day the mother ran in to tell the neighbors that little Esther had a tooth; and when it was time for the father to come home, she ran to meet him, with the baby in her arms, and said:

"Look, look, baby has a tooth!"

"Soon," they said, "our dear little baby girl will walk."

And sure enough, one day little Esther let go of father's hand, and toddled across into mother's outstretched arms.

"Soon," they said, "our dear little baby girl will talk."

And sure enough, she began to say "father" and "mother" and many other words; but we could not have understood her baby prattle, because in that long-ago time, and in that far-away country, the language was very different from ours.

"Soon," they said, "our little girl will begin to study."

And sure enough, when she was a little older, her mother began to teach her to read, and taught her the laws of the great Jehovah which all the little Jewish children learned.

"Soon," they said, "our dear little girl will be old enough to help."

But when little Esther was twelve years old she fell ill. Day by day she grew worse, and no one of all who tried could make her well.

"But surely, surely, some one can help," said the poor mother, and the father said, too,"There must be some one somewhere who can make our little girl well."

Then he thought of Jesus, the wonderful healer. Could he help? He would go to him and see. He found Jesus on the street with a great crowd of people about him. Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, made his way through the crowd and fell on his knees in front of Jesus.

"O Master," he said, "my dear little daughter is at the point of death. If you will but come and speak to her, I believe it will make her well."

The Master put his hand on Jairus' shoulder, and said, with much of gentleness and pity in his voice, "I will go."

People thronged about him, and many stopped him to beg for help. It seemed to Jairus they would never reach his home. When they were almost there, a servant came running to meet him.

"Why trouble the Master now?" the servant said to Jairus. "The little girl is dead."

Jesus only put his arm about Jairus' shoulders a little more closely and said:

"Only believe, my friend. It will be all right. Come with me," and they went right on to Jairus' home.

There the people were excited and crying, and making a great noise. Jesus told them all to go out of the house. Then he took the father and mother of little Esther and went into the room where she lay, white and still and cold.

With eyes full of sadness, that turned to wonder and to joy, they watched the Master as he went near and took in his tender grasp the little white, cold hand.

O-237

RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

From a painting by Julian De Vriendt

"Get up, little girl," he said softly, as if she were asleep, and he would waken her. And from the deep sleep of death she wakened at the sound of his wondrous voice and came back to the life and love that awaited her.

And everywhere throughout the land people heard of the little girl who came back from the land of death, back to love and happiness in her father's home, at the call of Jesus, the great physician.

The great Physician now is near,
The sympathizing Jesus.
He speaks the drooping heart to cheer,
Oh, hear the voice of Jesus.

Sweetest note in seraph song,
Sweetest word on mortal tongue,
Sweetest carol ever sung,
Jesus, blessèd Jesus.

CHRIST AMONG THE LOWLY
From a painting by Léon L'Hermitte

For Thou, within no walls confined,
Dost dwell with those of humble mind;
Such ever bring Thee where they come,
And, going, take Thee to their home.
—*William Cowper*

A SAD HOME MADE GLAD

BY the Lake of Galilee in a beautiful house there lived a rich man and his wife and little boy. Because they lived near the lake where many fishing boats went sailing by each day, the little boy played at making boats and sailing them.

The rich man loved his little boy very dearly and often sat and watched him play with his little friends. He thought what a fine big boy he would soon be, and sometimes he thought of what a splendid man he would be when he grew up.

But one day the little boy didn't go out to play. He said he was too tired, and stayed in the house with his mother all day.

"Tomorrow," the father said, "he will go out and play with his little friends." But when tomorrow came, the little boy said again that he was tired and did not want to play.

"Let him rest today," the father said. "Tomorrow he will go out and play with his little friends." But when tomorrow came, the little boy was even more tired. He was so tired he did not want to get up, and so his father said, "We shall send for a wise physician who will make our little boy feel rested."

When the wise physician came, he said the little boy was very ill and must stay in bed. The next day he came again. He said the little boy was not any better. This made the rich man and his wife very sad. They sent for another wise physician, and he, too, said the little boy was very ill and perhaps would never be well again.

It broke the father's heart to think his little boy would never grow to be a fine big boy nor a splendid man. The father and mother begged the wise physicians to do something, but they said, "No one can help."

©Underwood & Underwood

A SAILBOAT ON THE RIVER

The poor father forgot about his riches and his fine home by the lake. He could only think of his poor little son who was going to die. Sometimes he stayed in the room with the little boy and wept. Other times he went out and walked beside the lake and said over and over to himself,

"What shall I do?"

When he saw the fishing boats on the lake he said:

"How can I bear to think that my little boy will never play again at making and sailing boats; how can I bear to think that he will never grow up?"

Again and again he said,

"Is there nothing that I can do?"

At night he could not sleep. He kept thinking,

"What can I do for my boy? Where can I find some one who will help?"

HEALING THE SICK
From an engraving

One night as he lay awake thinking about all the physicians he had ever heard of, he remembered something about a young man who went about healing people and helping them. Some people said,

"He is God's Son, sent to be our King. It is with the power of God, his Father, that he heals the sick and does other wonderful things."

Very early in the morning the father went out and began to ask where he might find this young man. Some one told him Jesus was in Cana. Cana was a little village a long way from the city on the lake where the rich man lived. It took almost a whole day to go to Cana, and it was nearly night when the father at last found Jesus. In the street he saw a great crowd.

"Perhaps some one in this crowd," he said, "can help me to find Jesus." But when he came near he found that Jesus was there, and these people were following him and listening to him. The poor father hurried through the crowd and came close to Jesus.

"My dear little son is about to die," he said to Jesus. "Will you make him well?"

Jesus heard him and answered at once. "Go home," he said, "and you will find your son well." The father thanked him and went away. It was night and he must wait until morning to start home, but he was not anxious about his little boy now. He had looked into the face of Jesus and knew that he could do just what he promised, and the father was sure he would find his little boy well. Sure enough, when he came nearly to his home the next day, two servants came to meet him and told him his little son was well.

"When did he begin to get well?" the rich man asked his servants. And when they answered, "Yesterday at the seventh hour," the rich man said, "That was just the time I was talking to Jesus."

When he came nearer to his home, there was his dear little boy running to meet him, and crying out,

"Father, see, I am well. I can play with my little friends today."

But before he let the little boy go out to play, the father gathered all the servants of his house together, and he and the little boy and the little boy's mother and all his servants knelt down and thanked God for sending his Son, Jesus, into the world to make their home so happy.

THE LITTLE BOY WHO HELPED

ONE day the Little Boy ran excitedly into the house and said, all out of breath, "Mother, mother, let's go to Capernaum tomorrow. Please, mother, can't we?"

Lovingly the mother smiled, and quietly she said, "Now, wait a minute, son, till you get your breath, and then we'll talk it over." When the Little Boy had rested a bit, and mother was ready to listen, he told her that Jesus was at Capernaum and that some of the neighbors were going there next day. He had heard them talking about it.

"And, O mother," he said, "let us go, too. I want to see Jesus again. Don't you remember that time he was here, what splendid games he taught us boys, and what wonderful stories he told us? And, mother," the Little Boy's voice was almost a whisper now, "every time I looked at his good face, and into his loving eyes, I couldn't help wanting to be ever so good. And, mother, I just love him so much, I wish I could do something for him."

The mother said she couldn't go next day, but that the Little Boy might go with the neighbors. Very early in the morning he was ready. Under his arm he carried a little lunch, for it was a long walk to Capernaum, and dinnertime would come long before they could get back.

The morning sun gleamed and sparkled on the shining, dancing leaves, the birds sang a merry good morning to the Little Boy and his friends. They laughed and talked and ran and jumped and had a good time as only boys can do, but always, way down in the Little Boy's heart, was the thought, "I am going to see Jesus, and I wish I might do something for him to show him that I love him." He didn't tell this to the boys who were with him. Oh, no; he was afraid they would laugh at him.

At last they came to Capernaum, and there they were greatly disappointed. They had expected to find a great crowd of people down near the lake listening to Jesus, but the people were not there, and Jesus was not there. When the Little Boy's friends asked some of the people of Capernaum where Jesus had gone, they said, "He and his disciples got into Peter's boat and rowed across the lake."

The Little Boy was afraid his friends would go back home without seeing Jesus, for they had no boat in which to row across the lake. But they said, "It is not far. Let us walk around the end of the lake and see if we can find Jesus and his disciples on the other side." So they started around the north end, and on the way they saw many people going to find Jesus.

The Little Boy came upon a lame lad sitting by the side of the road resting, and stopped to say "Hello" to him.

"Where are you going?" the lame boy asked.

"To find Jesus," replied the Little Boy. "Have you heard anybody say where he is?"

"Oh, yes," the lame boy answered. "I know where he is. He is over across the lake. I hobbled down here this morning just in time to miss him. Somebody said maybe he could make my legs straight, but I don't know as he could. Anyway, I missed him."

"Oh, yes, he could," the Little Boy said eagerly. "I think he could: I know him, and I know he has done wonderful things. You come along with us. I will help you walk. You can lean on me when you are real tired."

So the lame lad got up and limped along beside the Little Boy. It was a pretty long walk, but after a while they came around to the eastern shore of the lake, and there they found Jesus.

There was a great crowd of people about him, and he was teaching and preaching. All day he was busy and kind and loving, healing the sick and the lame and the blind, and comforting those who were sad.

O-245

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

From a painting by Murillo

The Little Boy and his lame friend were separated in the crowd, but before the day was over, the Little Boy heard some one calling:

"Look, look, see how I can run!" It was the lame lad, and his legs were quite straight and strong. "I am glad you brought me," he said. "I would not have come if it had not been for you, and now see what he has done for me."

It was nearly evening when there came to the Little Boy the chance he had wanted all day, the chance to help Jesus. He heard the disciples say to the Master,

"Send these people away. It is nearly suppertime."

But the Master answered,

"Let us give them something to eat here."

"Why, we have nothing for ourselves even," said the disciples, "and there is no place here where we could buy bread for so many even if we had lots of money."

The Little Boy saw how tired Jesus looked, and he thought of the little lunch mother had prepared for him in the morning. Half of it he had eaten at the noontime. But there were still five small round loaves and two little dried fishes. He knew what he wanted to do, but it took a good deal of courage to slip up close to Andrew and say, almost in a whisper:

"Here is my lunch. I only ate part of it at noon. There isn't much, but maybe it's enough for Jesus, and I should like him to have it. Truly I should."

Andrew didn't laugh at him. Neither did Jesus, when Andrew handed him the little lunch and told him about the Little Boy. Ah, no; Jesus looked about for the Little Boy, and nodded to him, and smiled, and the Little Boy was so pleased that he came near running away right then and there.

"But, oh, I'm glad I didn't," he told his mother when he got home that night. "For, mother, I saw Jesus do the most wonderful thing. I heard Peter say, 'There are five thousand men here, besides the women and children.' And, mother, Jesus fed all those people with my little lunch."

"I heard him tell the disciples to make the people all sit down on the grass; and then he took the loaves and fishes, and held them in his hands, and thanked our Heavenly Father. He told the disciples to bring some baskets, and he began breaking up my little loaves and fishes, and soon you'd think, wouldn't you, mother, they'd be all gone. But they were not! There was enough to fill Peter's basket, and John's and James' and Andrew's, and all the rest, and then Peter came back, and his was filled again, and then John's again, and then James', and all the others were filled again, and again, till every one of the people had enough, and there was more left than I had in the beginning. Wasn't it wonderful, mother? How could he do it?"

The mother put her arm about the Little Boy's shoulder, and drew him close to her and said softly, "Dear, it must be because he is, as he says, the Son of the great Jehovah."

In the trees, the birds are singing,
In the mountains, in the glens,
By the rivers and the brooks and by the sea.
But there's food for all the robins,
And the tiny little wrens,
And there's bread in His hand for me.

A PICNIC OF LONG AGO

The word "disciple" means learner. All who followed Jesus, or who follow him now, to learn from him, are called disciples. Jesus chose twelve disciples to be with him all the time. These twelve are usually called "apostles." The word "apostle" means one who is sent. The Twelve were sent out by Jesus to tell others about him.

IN Palestine the flowers bloomed and flung their heads gaily in the breeze. The birds sang merrily. The children laughed and sang as merrily as the birds. They were very happy because today they were going for a walk with their mothers.

All the morning they had been busy getting ready to go. The bigger boys and girls had helped their mothers to get their homes in order and the little children dressed.

At last Miriam, looking out, said, "Mother, the others are all ready."

Miriam's mother came to the door with the baby in her arms and looked out. There was the mother from across the road with her children, and the mother from next door with her children, and the mother who lived down the road a little way was waiting with her little boy. They were a merry party. The boys ran ahead, and jumped and laughed and shouted and did all the funny things boys love to do.

"Don't get your clothes dirty," the mothers cautioned, and the boys tried to be careful, for were they not going to see Jesus? They wanted to look as nice and clean as they could. The girls gathered flowers by the way. They thought perhaps Jesus would like them, and I am sure they were right, for Jesus loved the flowers as he loved the birds and the little children, and all other beautiful things which grow.

At last they came to a quiet, shady place beside the road. A great tree grew there, and under its branches was a deep well

CHRIST BLESSING THE CHILDREN

From a painting by Mathias Schmid

of cool, sweet water, with a wide stone wall around it. "Here," the mothers said, "we shall rest and eat our lunch and give the children a drink."

After the lunch the children played again. They did not go far away, for the mothers said, "Jesus will be going by here soon, and if you are not here you will miss seeing him."

The older boys and girls sat down by the road to wait for him, and as they waited they talked. "I remember just how Jesus looked when I saw him," Miriam said. "My mother took me to Cana to my cousin's wedding, and Jesus was there. He had the kindest face I ever saw, and he made every one there have a good time."

"And I remember him, too," little Mark said. "He goes to my uncle's house lots of times, and when I was there, he took me out for a walk, and told me nice stories about the birds and trees and everything."

"My aunt knows him," Samuel said. "Once when she was sick, and every one thought she was going to die, Jesus made her well just in a minute."

Just then they heard some one coming. It was Jesus and his disciples. Jesus looked tired and sad. People had been unkind to him. People whom he loved and wanted to help had turned away from him and would not believe in him. But when he saw the children waiting for him, when he saw the mothers with the dear little babies in their arms, the sad look went away out of his face. His heart was glad, and his face was loving and smiling and kind and beautiful.

The disciples came up first, and said to the mothers, "Take your children away. Jesus can't be bothered with them. He is a great teacher and preacher. He has a great work to do."

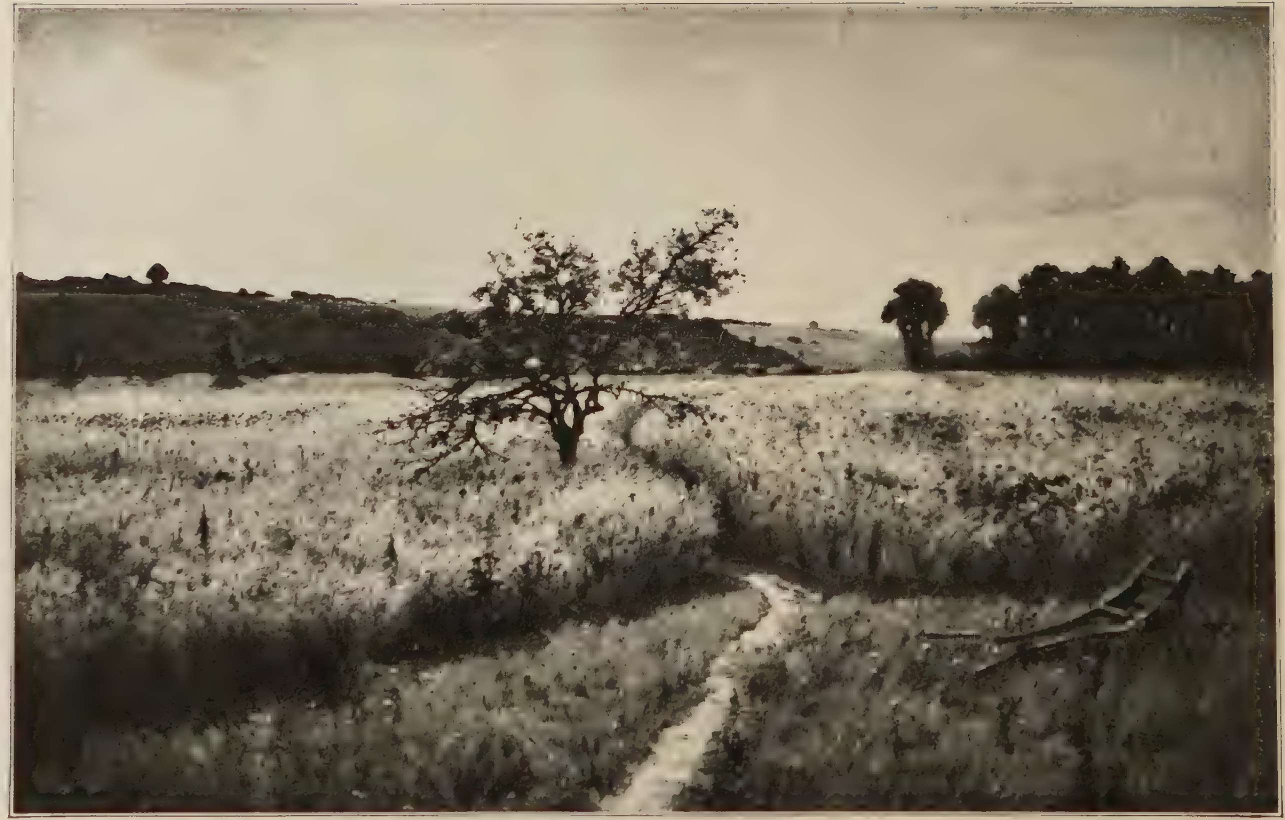
But Jesus said to the disciples, "Suffer the little children to come unto me. Don't send them away. I love them, every one. You go on to the village; I will rest here a while, and play with the children."

"COME UNTO ME"

From a painting by G. Fügel

He sat down on the wall which was built about the well, and the mothers brought the children, and Jesus put his hands on them and blessed them. Even the tiniest ones were not afraid. They held out their dear little hands to him, and he took them in his arms and talked to them, and all the others gathered close around. The girls brought the flowers they had gathered for him, the boys gave him a drink, and the mothers gave him the lunch that was left. He told them all wonderful stories such as they had never heard before, and every one had the happiest kind of time. All too quickly the beautiful afternoon was gone and the picnic was over, but through all their lives, till they were old, old men and women, those little children remembered the time they saw Jesus and played and talked with him.

CHRIST AND THE CHILDREN
From a painting by T. H. Lisiewicz



FIELDS IN BLOSSOM

From a painting by F. Quignon

THE WONDERFUL STORY-TELLER

ONE day Jesus was sitting upon the roof of Peter's house. Peter's children and some other children of the neighborhood were up there with him, and they were all happy together until some grown-up people came up and began to quarrel. Each one said to Jesus, "Don't you think I can do the best work? Won't you give me the best place when you are king?"

Jesus listened for a moment. Then he drew Peter's little boy up close to him and said:

"Look at this little fellow, how happy and kind and innocent he is. See all these little children. They are not quarreling about which is best or who is least or who is greatest. Now, unless you learn to be like these children, I shall not think that any of you love me at all."

They were ashamed then, and sat down together to be friends; and as they all sat there on Peter's cool, shady roof, Jesus told them stories. The one the children liked best was about a little lost sheep.

The shepherd had one hundred sheep. Every morning as he let them out of the fold, he counted them; and every evening as they went in, he counted them again to see that all were there. One night he counted them, one, two, three, and on up to ten and then up to twenty, and on and on until he came to ninety-two, ninety-three, ninety-four, ninety-five, ninety-six, ninety-seven, ninety-eight, ninety-nine—and that was all! One was gone!

The shepherd went inside and looked them all over. He had a name for each one. The one that was not in the fold was a little white lamb named Fluff. Where could he be? The shepherd said, "I must go back and find him."

"But," said the man who helped the shepherd, "it is beginning to get dark, and it looks as if it would storm. Don't go. You have ninety-nine sheep here. Don't bother about that one little lamb!"

But the shepherd thought of poor little Fluff, out in the dark alone, lost and frightened, and he said, "I must go and find him."

Now, that day Fluff had had a very happy time. He had romped and played in the bright sunshine and nibbled at the green, tender grass, and drunk from the still, cool water. He thought how fine it would be if he never had to go back and be shut up in the fold.

©Braun, Clement & Co.

SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME

From a painting by Ottilie Röderstein

When the afternoon shadows were beginning to grow long, and the still, sweet evening-time had come, the shepherd called to his sheep. They knew his call, and ran to him, ready to follow him home. All but little Fluff. He said to himself "I'll go in a minute."

He wanted to eat just a little more of the tender grass, and stay out-of-doors just a little longer. Again the shepherd called, and started home, and Fluff saw all the other sheep follow him.

"Let them go," he thought. "I'll go in a minute. I can catch up."

THE CHRIST

From a sculpture by Fritz Schaper

All at once everything about him seemed so still it frightened him, and made him feel quite lonely. He started on a run to catch the shepherd and the rest of the sheep. But they were nowhere in sight. He couldn't hear them, either, and somehow he felt just a little bit uncertain which way to go. He ran one way a little while, then turned back and went in another direction, and finally knew that he was lost, and couldn't tell at all how to get home. He began to cry, and to call, Baa, Baa; but, alas! the shepherd had gone too far to hear. It soon grew very dark, and Fluff was afraid. How he wished he had started when the shepherd called the first time! Oh, if he were only safe in the shelter of the fold with the other sheep, instead of out here on the bleak, dark hills alone! Oh, if the good, kind shepherd would only come!

Darker and darker grew the night, and poor little Fluff stumbled on, scratching himself in the briers, slipping and falling and never seeming to come any closer home. All the time, out in the dark, stormy night the good shepherd was hunting him. He, too, stumbled and fell and was scratched by the briers and wet with the rain; but he loved poor, naughty little Fluff, and on and on he went, trying to find him. After a long time he thought he heard a little cry, "Baa, Baa."

"Fluff," he called; "Oo-ee, oo-ee!"

Then he listened again, and stumbled on. Pretty soon the faint cry came again, and again he called.

"Baa, Baa," came the weak little voice of Fluff.

"Oo-ee, oo-ee!" answered the shepherd.

After a while, in the dark and the storm, the shepherd found the little frightened lamb, caught in the brambles, torn and bleeding and ashamed. The good, kind shepherd gathered him up in his loving arms and carried him all the long, rough way home, and there, though he was tired and wet and cold, he made a soft, warm bed for Fluff, rubbed his bruises and scratches with healing oil, and made him comfortable and happy. Then he went to tell his neighbors the good news that he had found his lost sheep.

And little Fluff, warm and comfortable, thought of the dear, good, kind shepherd who had gone over such a long, hard way to bring him safely home after he had been so naughty; and he made up his mind he would never again fail to come when the shepherd called, but would always follow close and do just what he was told.

WHEN THE CHILDREN SANG

THEY could romp and play and get their faces and hands just as dirty as other boys, these little fellows who sang in the choir in the great temple at Jerusalem; but when they put on their white robes and sang, their sweet, rapt faces and clear, childish voices made one think of angels singing round the great white throne in Heaven. Perhaps the Heavenly Father hushed the songs of the angels about him that he might better listen to the children singing in the temple.

There came one day into the temple one homesick for the heavenly home, one hungry for the sound of angels singing, for Heaven was his home. He was the son of God. He had left all, the love and gladness, the brightness and beauty of Heaven, and come to earth to offer love and happiness to those who so sadly needed it. But they had turned away and had wounded his great, loving heart. They had not wanted his help, and his life on earth was a sad and lonely one.

Just yesterday, for a little while, some had gathered about him, and called him their king and sung his praises, but today they were afraid and turned away and left him in his loneliness. He went out and looked over the great, beautiful city, the city God had set there like a jewel in the hills. It was called the "City of our God." But, oh, how cruelly people of that city had rejected God's son. He wanted to love them, but they would not have his love. He longed to help them and make them good and happy, but they refused his help.

He held out his arms to the great, beautiful city, as a mother holds out her arms of love to her children that she may clasp them to her bosom.

"O Jerusalem," he said, "how often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chickens beneath her wings, and ye would not, ye would not."

WAITING FOR JESUS
From a painting by George W. Joy

Down into the city he went and to the temple, and there he found men buying and selling, not for sacrifice, as the Law said they might, but dishonestly, and for selfish gain. He stood among them, and lifted his arm, the strong right arm of a man who lived much out-of-doors, who could easily row a boat across the Sea of Galilee. But there was far more in the arm he stretched toward them, in the burning look he turned upon them, than the strength of a man. There was the divine power that made earth and sky and sea; that could calm a storm or make a bright day dark as night; that could heal disease and say even to Death:

"Stand back, give up thy prey."

What wonder that they who knew the Law and they that disobeyed it, gathered their wares about them and slunk away, as he said, "My Father's house is a house of prayer, and ye have made of it a den of thieves." There were frowns on their faces, muttered curses on their lips, and hatred in their hearts.

Once again the Son of God felt his great loneliness and yearned for some little show of love from some one somewhere.

From out of the temple came the choir boys. For that day their singing was done. There in the court they saw him standing alone. There came into the face of the one nearest him the hurt look children have when they see their mother cry. Just as he would have tried to comfort his mother, this little fellow crept close to Jesus. He leaned against him and looked up, smiling shyly, into his face. The others followed and stood about wondering. Then they, too, came close to Jesus, who loved the children and always understood them, whose face brightened when he saw them, and whose heart was light and merry when they were about him.

"Let us sing to him," said one, and high and clear their sweet young voices rose and rang through the temple courts. "Hosanna, Hosanna." It was one of the songs they sang in the temple choir. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Higher and higher, more and more joyously they sang. The tired, sad look had gone out of Jesus' face. His heart was glad within him as he listened. They understood, these dear boys; they loved him. All the children he had ever known loved him, and as he thought of them he was no longer lonely.

Then came men from the temple who would have hushed the song. "It is not time for you to sing," they said to the boys. But Jesus waved them back.

"Let them sing," he said softly. "Let them sing."

And when he went out from the temple court, the choir boys went with him, singing, "Hosanna, to our King."

THE HOLY SUPPER
From a painting by E. von Gebhardt

THE LAST SUPPER

ONE day two friends crossed together the Brook Kidron, just outside of Jerusalem, walked up the hill, through the big gates in the wall and into the streets of the beautiful city.

"Look," said one of them, "there is a man with a pitcher. Do you think he is the man we are looking for?"

The man carrying the pitcher came toward them; so they stopped, and when he was quite near they said, "Jesus, our Master, said we would find a man in the street in Jerusalem carrying a pitcher, and that he would let us go to his house and prepare a place for Jesus to eat the feast of the Passover."

The man with the pitcher smiled in a kind and friendly way and said, "My good friends, I am the man you are looking for. I have a big room at the top of my house, and I am happy indeed to have Jesus come there with his disciples, and eat the feast of the Passover."

Now Jesus had no home at all on earth. He had left his home in Heaven to come down to earth to help the people here. But he was so kind that there was always some home open to him, some place where he could go and where he had kind, loving friends to minister unto him. Here was the man with the pitcher (we think his name was John Mark), and he had on the wide, flat roof of his house a big, beautiful room with many windows, clean and cool and inviting. The two friends went on to John Mark's house and up the outside stairs to the big, clean, cool room on the roof. In it they found a table and benches and plenty of room for Jesus and his twelve disciples to sit down to the table together. They made everything ready for the feast, and when it was evening-time, and the setting sun sent long, warm rays of yellow light through the open windows, Jesus and the other disciples came, and together they sat down and ate and talked.

After a while Jesus told them something that made them feel very, very sad. It was that this was the very last time they would eat together. He was going away. His work in the world was done. He was going back to his heavenly home. Then he told them they were not to be sad, but to be comforted and to think of the time when they, too, would come to the heavenly home and be with him there.

"It is my home and my Father's home, and there are many beautiful mansions there for those who love us. I am going to begin right away to get one ready for each of you, and when you have finished your work in the world, as I have finished mine now, you will come and we shall all be happy together there."

The disciples had never thought about that. To them dying meant something very, very sad and terrible, but Jesus helped them to see that it was not that way at all, that his dying and going away would be a very beautiful thing, and that some day the same wonderful, beautiful thing would happen to them.

THE LAST SUPPER
From a painting by Andrea del Sarto

When it was dark, they sang a hymn together and were comforted. Then they went out from the big upper room, down the outside stairs, across the little babbling brook, up the hill again into a sweet old garden of olive trees where Jesus loved to rest and pray.

The next day the enemies of Jesus put him to death on the cross. The disciples were broken-hearted. Their dearest Friend, their Teacher and Guide, was gone, but I think that often and often on that dark, sad day they thought of the sweet, quiet time they had together with him in the upper room, and of Jesus' comforting words. They wished it was time now to go to him in that heavenly home he had told them about, but they remembered that he had said they must finish their work first.

Into the woods my Master went,
  Clean forspent, forspent, . . .
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him,
The thorn tree had a mind to Him,
  When into the woods He came.

—*Sidney Lanier*

"HE IS RISEN!"

From a painting by Axel Ender

THE FIRST GLAD EASTER

IN the garden the soft, silvery moonlight faded to gray. The flowers and grasses lay asleep. Soon the warm, caressing rays of morning sunlight would waken them. In this quiet, peaceful place among the roses there was a new tomb. It was a cave in the side of a hill, with a big, round, flat stone to roll before the door. The loving friends of Jesus had tenderly wrapped the body in soft white linen and laid it in this tomb.

"He is dead," they told one another, as with sad, broken hearts they went away home. Now, very early in the morning, when the moonlight was gone, and the sunlight had not yet come, while the flowers and grasses slept in the cold, gray gloom, three women came with swift feet to the garden gate. These three had been good friends of Jesus. Through two long, sad nights they had stayed together. They could not sleep; so they worked together, getting ready sweet spices and costly oils.

"We shall take them to the tomb," they said, "and put them on the head and hands and feet of our blessed Lord and Master. It is the last kindness we can show to him we loved so dearly."

They had forgotten how often and often he had said to them that he would rise from the dead, or perhaps they remembered, but did not understand.

The great stone had been rolled before the door of the new tomb in the garden; but as the three friends came through the garden gate, they saw the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was open. "Who could have done it?" they wondered. They came near to the open tomb in the garden sweet with the fragrance of dewy roses. Very close together they kept, for they were afraid; they knew not of what. They crept closer and looked in, but the tomb was empty. The body of Jesus, their friend, was gone. Instead, a great, white, shining angel greeted them.

"Fear not," he said. "You seek Jesus? He is not here, but is risen, as he said. Go tell his disciples that Jesus is risen from the dead, and that he will meet them in Galilee."

Two of the women hurried away to tell the glad tidings to Jesus' other friends, but Mary lingered in the garden, weeping. She could not go away until she knew what had happened to him she loved so much. She went over and stood beside the tomb among the roses that hung their sleepy heads over the hard, gray rocks.

"Tell me where they have taken my Lord," she said to one who stood there. Her eyes were so full of tears that she could not see, and she thought he was the gardener.

"Mary," he said; and at the loving tone she had heard often and often before, she looked up quickly, and saw that Jesus himself stood there.

All the gray gloom of the morning vanished. The morning sunshine gilded every nook and corner of the sweet old garden; and the flowers, awake now, stirred joyously in the breeze, and they and the happy birds seemed to sing together that first glad Easter morning, "Christ is risen, Christ is risen."

Since then the children have taken up the song, and everywhere they sing on Easter day, the glad, glad message the angel gave to the three friends, "Christ is risen, Christ is risen."

POEMS AND STORIES ABOUT JESUS

GREEN THE HILLS AND LOVELY

Green the hills and lovely,
That with blossoms smiled
Round the house where Jesus
Was a little child;
Jesus loved the flow'rets,
And the song-birds sweet,
And the waving grasses growing round His feet.

In the hours of playtime
Happy was His heart—
Gently, bravely, taking
Still the weakest part;
In the hours of schooltime,
All around Him knew
That His lips would utter never word untrue.

Did He sing in boyhood
With the birds around?
Glorious psalms of David
Did His voice re-sound?
Yes, I think that music
To His heart was dear;
Now in heav'n He listens children's hymns to hear.

Tender and obedient
Was the Holy Child,
Over self the victor—
Loving, patient, mild.
Ever in His footsteps
Daily I would tread,
In the holy pathway where His light is shed.

—*M. Scott Haycraft*

THE MADONNA AND THE LAMB
From a painting by W. A. Bouguereau

THE HELPER OF HIS MOTHER

The helper of His mother,
A faithful Hebrew lad,
For sister and for brother,
Christ wrought with spirit glad;
And made that cottage lowly,
That work-bench by the door,
A labor lesson holy to love forevermore.

Oh, sing! ye tired and tearful,
What this sweet story saith;
For all that's brave and cheerful
Comes out of Nazareth!
Let serving hands fly faster,
New years new burdens bring;
Enough! if like our Master, the Carpenter and King!

—*M. Woolsey Stryker*

IN THE CARPENTER SHOP
From a painting by Dagnan-Bouveret

THE NAZARETH SHOP

"Is not This the Carpenter's Son?"

I wish I had been His apprentice, to see Him each morning
at seven,
As He tossed His gray tunic far from Him, the Master of
earth and of heaven;
When He lifted the lid of His work-chest and opened His
carpenter's kit
And looked at His chisels and augers, and took the bright
tools out of it,

While He gazed at the rising sun tinting the dew on the
opening flowers,
And smiled as He thought of His Father, whose love floods
this planet of ours;
When He fastened His apron about Him, and put on His
workingman's cap
And grasped the smooth hasp of the hammer, to give the
bent woodwork a tap,
Saying, "Lad, let me finish this ox-yoke. The farmer must
put in his crop."
Oh, I wish I had been His apprentice and worked in the Nazareth
shop!

Some wish they had been on Mount Tabor, to hearken unto
His high speech
When the quick and the dead were beside Him, He holding
communion with each.
Some wish they had heard the soft accents that stilled the
wee children's alarms,
When He won the sweet babes from their mothers and
folded them fast in His arms.
Some wish they had stood by the Jordan when holy John
greeted Him there,
And had seen the white dove of the Spirit fly down o'er
the path of His prayer.
Some wish they had seen the Redeemer when into the basin
He poured
The water, and, girt with a towel, the servant of all was
the Lord.
But for me, if I had the choosing, oh! this would them all
overtop,
To work all day steady beside Him, of old in the Nazareth
shop.

These heavenly wonders would fright me, I cannot approach to them yet.
But, oh! to have seen Him, when toiling, His forehead all jeweled with sweat;
To hear Him say softly, "My helper, now bring me the level and rule";
To hear Him bend over and teach me the use of the artisan's tool;
To hear Him say, "This is a sheep gate, to keep in the wandering flock,"
Or, "This is a stout oaken house sill. I hope it will rest on a rock."
And sometimes His mother might bring us our meal in the midsummer heat,
Outspread it so simply before us, and bid us sit down and eat.
Then with both of us silent before Him, the blessèd Messiah would stop
To say grace, and a tremulous glory would fill the Nazareth shop.

—*Robert McIntyre*

JESUS AND THE CHILDREN
From a painting by Komaraimkez

CHRIST AND THE LITTLE ONES

"The Master has come over Jordan,"
Said Hannah the mother one day;
"He is healing the people who throng Him,
With a touch of His finger, they say.

"And now I shall carry the children,
Little Rachel and Samuel and John,
I shall carry the baby Esther,
For the Lord to look upon."

The father looked at her kindly,
But he shook his head and smiled:
"Now who but a doting mother
Would think of a thing so wild?

"If the children were tortured by demons,
Or dying of fever, 'twere well;
Or had they the taint of the leper,
Like many in Israel."

"Nay, do not hinder me, Nathan;
I feel such a burden of care,
If I carry it to the Master,
Perhaps I shall leave it there.

"If He lay His hand on the children,
My heart will be lighter, I know,
For a blessing forever and ever
Will follow them as they go."

So over the hills of Judah,
Along by the vine-rows green,
With Esther asleep on her bosom
And Rachel her brothers between;

'Mid the people who hung on His teaching,
Or waited His touch or His word,—
Through the row of proud Pharisees listening,
She pressed to the feet of the Lord.

"Now why shouldst thou hinder the Master,"
Said Peter, "with children like these?
See'st not how from morning to evening
He teacheth, and healeth disease?"

Then Christ said, "Forbid not the children,
Permit them to come unto Me!"
And He took in His arms little Esther.
And Rachel He set on His knee;

And the heavy heart of the mother
Was lifted all earth-care above,
As He laid His hand on the brothers
And blest them with tenderest love;

As He said of the babes in His bosom,
"Of such are the kingdom of heaven"—
And strength for all duty and trial,
That hour to her spirit was given.

—*Julia Gill*

BLESSING THE CHILDREN
From a painting by Julius Kronberg

PETER, THE POTTER'S SON

By Dorothy Donnell Calhoun

IT was late afternoon in the little Syrian village of Gotham. In the sunny doorway of one of the smallest houses sat Peter, the son of the Potter, bending intently over a pile of soft yellow clay. From the house came the buzz-buzz of his father's wheel as it polished the tall earthen water jug for Aquilla, the rich widow of the village. At the end of the street the other girls and boys were playing in the square by the fountain. Peter could hear their shrieks of laughter as their sandaled feet flashed to and fro, but he did not look up from his work. With gentle fingers he was patting and shaping the clay into a rough figure with a head and arms and wings.

"Our little Peter is a strange child," said his mother, shaking her head, as she glanced out at him. "All day from sun-up to sun-down he sits over the clay that you brought him from the river bank. He says that he is making an angel! Did you ever hear of such a foolish one?"

The potter nodded, as his busy wheel polished the tall, yellow water jar. His face was troubled.

"He would be wiser to learn how to make pots," he sighed. "What does a child of ten know of angels?"

Peter, sitting on the step in the sun, heard what they said, and his face grew troubled. The brown earthen pots and vessels that his father had made seemed very ugly to him. Peter loved beautiful things. He loved the blue sky, and the red-and-white flowers, and the lark that sang early in the morning over the wheat fields. But his people were poor, and there was nothing pretty to look at inside the dark, two-roomed cottage.

CHRIST
From a painting by Hofmann

"If I can only make the figure of an angel," he thought wistfully, "I would put it on the chimney in the big room, and it would be something beautiful to look at all the time. For an angel must be very, very beautiful!"

He gazed down at the rough clay figure on the step. The wings looked real. Peter had seen wings himself; the arms, too, and the long robe were natural. But the face was just a shapeless lump of clay. Peter had tried a hundred times to make a face that would look like an angel's, but each time he had failed. How could he discover how an angel looked? Peter's eyes filled with tears.

Two boys came along the street. They were richly dressed in fine linen robes with purple hems, and gold cord in their sandals. Their fathers were wealthy merchants, with great herds of cattle and flocks of sheep.

"There is Peter, the Potter's son," said the older boy, whose name was Timothy. "Look at his ragged sandals! And he has a rope around his waist instead of a sash!"

"Ha! Ha!" laughed his friend Laban, unkindly. "What dreadful clothes! And I suppose he has only lentils to eat! I'm glad my father is rich!"

"My father is richer!" cried Timothy, angrily. "He has more herds than yours!"

"My father has more land!"

"He hasn't!"

"He has!"

The boys passed on, quarreling. Peter tried to pretend that he had not heard their cruel words, but a big tear rolled down one cheek before he could stop it. If he only had his beautiful figure to look at, he thought, he would not mind the ragged clothes, nor the jeers of the other children.

Once more he bent over the clay. A face grew slowly under his fingers—hair, forehead, eyes.

"Peace be to you, Peter," said a soft little voice almost in his ear. The boy turned. Persis, the little lame girl, stood beside him with her tame white dove on her shoulder. She was looking down on the clay figure curiously.

"What is that, Peter?"

"I am trying to make an angel," said the boy, sadly, "but the face is always wrong."

"Yes," said Persis, "it is not nearly beautiful enough for an angel. I have often dreamed I saw them, and they had such loving, tender faces. But it is a pretty figure, anyway."

Peter crumbled the new face under his fingers. "No, no! It is not pretty. I shall not try any more!" he cried, miserably. He watched the little girl limp away, her dove nestled against her long, dark curls, and he thought that Persis herself was almost beautiful enough for an angel.

It was growing dark. Peter put the clay figure under a jar and went slowly into the house. His father had stopped working, for they were too poor to buy candles, and his mother was stirring a pot over the fire.

"Father," asked Peter, "did any one ever see an angel?"

"Moses saw one," answered his father, "and Jacob and other great and good men long ago; but little boys like you should be thinking of filling water jars and gathering wood, and not of seeing angels. Ask no more questions, my son."

Peter ate his supper silently and went to bed. But he did not sleep for a long time. He lay looking up through a chink in the broken roof, at the dark blue sky, thinking very sad thoughts. At last a bright star shone down through the crack like a friendly eye, and Peter was somehow comforted and fell asleep.

It was daylight when he opened his eyes again, at his mother's voice.

"Peter, wake, my son," she cried. "Dress yourself and come with me."

In the street, when Peter and his mother came out of the house, were many people, all hurrying in one direction.

The boy saw Laban and Timothy and little Persis among the other children in the crowd. Every one was talking and pointing. One of the women stopped to speak to the potter's wife.

"He is yonder by the well on the road to Jordan, and his followers are with him," she cried, excitedly. "They say he has done many strange things in Galilee. There was a blind woman—"

The crowd swept her away before Peter could hear the rest. He held his mother's hand, and they went out of the winding village street, beyond the synagogue, the fig grove, and the granary of Titus.

By the wayside well stood a group of men with serious, kindly faces. One of these, who was hidden from Peter's sight by the rest, was speaking to the crowd. As he listened, Peter found himself pushed to the front of the gathering with the other children. Timidly he looked up at the speaker, and his heart leaped in sudden awe. The kindest, tenderest eyes that he had ever seen were looking down at him.

"Take your children away," said one of the strangers, rather impatiently. "The Master has no time for them."

"No," said the man in the white robe, lifting his hands sternly. "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

He stooped and lifted little lame Persis into his arms. The others crowded closer, touching the strange white robe with timid little fingers. Peter, kneeling at the man's side, thought suddenly of the blue sky, and the white-and-red flowers, and the lark singing over the yellow wheat, and all the other beautiful things he had ever seen. Timothy and Laban seemed to have forgotten their rich garments and their fathers' herds as they looked into the man's face.

"Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child," went on the low, grave voice, solemnly, "he shall not enter therein."

Peter said the words over to himself a little later as he walked home at his mother's side. He did not understand exactly what they meant, but he liked the sound of them.

"Mother," he said presently, catching hold of her hand, "who was the man who blessed us back there by the well?"

"They call him Jesus of Nazareth, my son," his mother answered slowly.

They turned into the shabby pottery, where the potter sat working over his wheel, and the mother entered the front door, stooping a little, for she was a tall woman. Peter sat on the step and took something from under one of the brown jars. As he bent over it joyfully with little gentle touches, the two merchants' sons passed the door again.

"There is Peter," said Timothy, eagerly. "O Peter, come with us! We are going to try my new sling."

"And I have a hunting knife for you," added Laban. "My father gave me two."

"I will come some other time," said Peter; "but now I have a task I must finish. Peace to you!"

An hour later little Persis came along the road. She was walking without limping, and her face was full of happiness. Peter looked up from his work.

"Persis!" he cried, excitedly, "come here!"

She looked over his shoulder. The little clay figure stood finished on the step.

"Oh, Peter, it is beautiful!" cried the girl. "But the face—how did you know?"

"It is the face of the man at the well," said Peter. "When I saw him I knew at last how the angels looked."

OLD TESTAMENT STORIES

To home-Sundays long since past
How fondly memory clings;
For then my mother told of Thee
Such sweet, such wondrous things.
—*Frederick W. Faber*

©Curtis & Cameron

RELIGION

From a painting by Charles Sprague Pearce

THE STORY OF GOD'S GARDEN

WOULD you like me to tell you a story about the most lovely garden there ever was?

You already know how God, our Heavenly Father, helps us make gardens. Now let me tell you how God made the first garden.

Our Heavenly Father planted this garden far, far away in the East. He filled it with all kinds of beautiful flowers, roses and lilies, and all the others, of every color. He put into it everything that men put into gardens today that is good for food. He planted an orchard too, every kind of fruit tree, apples and oranges and lemons and olives. Then it was more like a park than a garden, for he planted all the fine shade trees, with their green leaves and their bright blossoms. And he made four rivers to flow through his garden, so that nothing he had planted should dry up or wither.

In this country there was no winter, and it was never cold. All the year the flowers were blooming, all the year fruits were ripe, and there was never a fierce or chilling wind to hurt the flowers and fruits, and there was no ice over the rivers. It was always sunny in God's garden, except when the soft rains came to make the flowers happy.

The rocks in this garden glistened with gold, and through the waters of the rivers you could see bright precious stones lying in the sands. Wasn't this the loveliest place you could ever think of? Wasn't our Heavenly Father happy when he had it finished?

God used to walk in his garden in the cool of the day, and enjoy its beauty. But our Heavenly Father was lonely.

So one day God bent down when he was walking and took up some earth, and he breathed life into it, and it became a man. This man was like God; he could talk and laugh and be happy, and enjoy the beautiful garden with his Heavenly Father. And every day the man would meet God in the garden in the cool of the day, and he and his Heavenly Father would walk and talk together. The Heavenly Father was happy with his son, and the man was happy with his Heavenly Father.

But the man got lonely too. So God made all the animals, and all the cattle, and all the birds that fly in the air, to live in the garden with this first man, whose name was Adam. And God brought them to Adam to see what he would call them, and Adam gave names to all the animals and birds, and for a while he was happy playing with them and taking care of them.

Still Adam was lonely. And one night, while Adam was fast asleep, God came, and touched Adam's side, and took something from it, and in the morning when Adam awoke, there was a lovely woman beside him, made from the man himself. The woman was like God and like Adam, for she could talk and laugh and be happy. Now he had some one who could really help him, and they used to walk together and play together in the garden. Adam loved this first woman, whom the Heavenly Father had given him for his wife, and Adam gave her a beautiful name; he called her Eve, which means "Life."

Ever since then a man will leave everybody else, his father and his mother and his brothers and his sisters, so that he may live with a woman that he loves. Nobody was ever so happy as these two, in this most beautiful place in all the world. For they loved their Heavenly Father, and they loved the world that he had made for them. And every evening when it was cool, our Heavenly Father came to walk with his children, Adam and Eve, in his garden. And God was not lonely any more, for he had somebody to love, and somebody who knew how to love him.

Don't you think Adam and Eve loved their Heavenly Father, who had made them for each other, and had made this wonderful home for them?

I think so, and I was thinking today how much we ought to love our Heavenly Father now, who has made this world so beautiful and given us the flowers and the fruits, and our food, and the birds and beasts, and the sunshine and rain, and the sunset, and all the things that we really need. Don't you think so too?

ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

All things bright and beautiful,
    All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
    The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
    Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
    He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain,
    The river running by,
The sunset and the morning,
    That brightens up the sky;

The cold wind in the winter,
    The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,—
    He made them every one.

The tall trees in the greenwood,
    The meadows where we play,
The rushes by the water
    We gather every day;

He gave us eyes to see them,
    And lips that we might tell,
How great is God Almighty,
    Who has made all things well.

—*C. Frances Alexander*

©Curtis & Cameron

LABOR

From a painting by Charles Sprague Pearce

HOW MEN LOST THE GARDEN OF DELIGHT

DO you remember the story I told you of the delightful garden that God gave to Adam and Eve, his first children? It was so beautiful that it was called the Garden of Eden, which means "the Garden of Delight."

Shall I tell you another story about this garden? Well, in the midst of that garden there was a wonderful tree. It was lovely to look upon, and its fruit was sweet to taste; but our Heavenly Father had said to Adam and Eve, "You must never taste of this fruit. You must not even touch it."

Do you suppose Adam asked, "Why?"

God told them, "This fruit is like poison to you if you eat it. It will make you unhappy, and you will be sick, and by and by you will die."

Adam and Eve were so frightened that for a long time they kept away from the tree entirely.

I have told you how Adam had given names to all the birds and beasts, and how he took care of them. He gave them food that he had worked to grow in the garden, and he was kind to them all. The animals were gentle to Adam and Eve, and they never would hurt the man or the woman who loved them. But there was one creature, a serpent, in God's garden who wanted to make trouble. He really wished to do something to hurt God's children.

One day Eve was walking alone in the garden, close by the tree that God had asked her never to touch. This serpent came up behind her and began to talk to her.

"Has God told you that you must not eat of any of the trees in the garden?" he asked.

"We may eat of the fruit of all the trees in the garden," said Eve, "but of this one tree in the midst of the garden God has said, 'You shall not eat of it, you shall not touch it, or else you will die.'"

"Oh," said the serpent, "you will not surely die. But God knows that if you eat of this tree, you will be as wise as he is, knowing good and evil."

Up to this time everything Eve had known had been good. "Evil" means wrong, and Eve had never known anything that was evil.

So now Eve went up to the tree and looked at it. She saw that the fruit seemed to be good to eat, and it was surely very pretty; and she began to want to know some of the "evil" that the beast had spoken of. Here was one thing that belonged to God that did not belong to Eve, and Eve wanted it.

So she took some of the fruit and ate it; and when Adam came, she told him what the beast had said, and she made him think it was true. Then she gave Adam some of the fruit also, and he ate it.

Our Heavenly Father was right. He knew what the fruit would do to Adam and Eve. He could see that they knew what was evil, or wrong; but he could also see, what the wicked beast did not tell them, that they would want to do wrong and cause trouble, just as the serpent did. That very day both of them did many things that their Father had asked them not to do.

When the cool of the day came, the man and woman heard God's voice in the garden; and when they thought of what they had been doing, they were afraid of God, and they did not run to meet him, but tried to hide themselves among the trees of the garden.

But God called them, and he said to Adam, "Where are you?"

And Adam said to his Heavenly Father, "I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid, and I hid myself."

And God said, "Are you afraid of me? Have you eaten of the fruit that I told you never to eat?"

And Adam said, "The woman that you gave me gave me the fruit and I ate it."

God said to the woman, "What have you done?"

And the woman said, "The serpent told me to eat it, and so I did."

Then God told the serpent that after this he would have to crawl on the ground, and men would always hate him and try to kill him, because of his evil. He told the woman that, because she had believed the serpent, she and her children would have many unhappy days. He explained to the man that, because he had listened to the woman, now he would soon get tired of taking care of the garden, and weeds and thistles would crowd out the flowers and fruit, and he would not be good to the birds and animals; and so he and his wife must go out away from their Heavenly Father's beautiful garden, lest they hurt the lovely things that God had made.

It is a sad story, isn't it, dear? But God could not let men spoil his garden, could he? He wanted to give it back some day to his children after they had learned better how to take care of it.

Then God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden, and he told two of his watchmen to stand beside the gate with a bright sword, so that the man and woman might not come back into his beautiful home.

So Adam and Eve walked away, hand in hand, and they were very sad. God was wiser than the serpent, and what he said was true. Adam and Eve knew evil now, more than good, and it made them and their children unhappy. Adam tried to make a new garden for himself and Eve, and he worked in it with sweaty face, wishing he could make it beautiful like God's garden. Winter came, and Adam brought Eve skins of animals, and Eve made clothes out of them to keep them both warm. They loved each other better as they worked together, and they tried to comfort one another in their sorrow.

There is one happy thing in all this sad, sad story. When God had to send his two children out from his garden, he did not forget them. He followed them all the way, and although they could not see him any more, he watched them every day and took care of them and was good to them.

THE STORY OF THE ANGRY BROTHER

AFTER Adam and Eve went away from the Garden of Delight, they tried to make themselves a home. Adam took care of sheep and cattle and made a little garden of his own, and Eve worked in the house. God gave them children, little boys and girls, and perhaps they made their mother so happy that she often forgot that she had lost the beautiful Garden of Eden.

The name of the oldest of Eve's boys was Cain. When he grew up, he became a farmer. The second child was called Abel. When he grew to be a man, he became a shepherd.

In those days men wanted to bring the best things they had for a present to their Heavenly Father. And so Cain brought some of the loveliest of the fruit that he had raised, and Abel brought of the finest of his lambs.

God was pleased with Abel's offering, but he was not pleased with Cain's. I do not quite know why. Cain was often cross and ugly. It may be that when he built his fire to burn his offering, he took wet wood and laid the sticks carelessly, and that when he tried to light it, he was angry because it would not burn. Perhaps Abel built his fire of nice, dry wood, and built it carefully so that when he lighted the fire, the flame came up clear and strong. I think Abel brought love and patience with his gift, while Cain brought hatred. For Cain was very angry when he saw that Abel had pleased God.

But the Heavenly Father talked with Cain, and he said to him:

"Why are you angry, and why is your face so changed? If you do right, will you not be happy? But if you do not do right, sin is crouching at your door, wanting to spring up like a beast and hurt you. But you should learn to drive it away from you."

Cain did not listen to God. He was so angry that he quarreled with his brother and said many bitter words to him, and finally he struck at him blindly—and he killed Abel.

Then he heard God's voice saying, "Where is Abel—your brother?"

And he answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

But God said: "What have you done? Your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. Hereafter the ground will no longer give you its fruits. You must go away now, and wander alone on the earth."

CAIN AND ABEL OFFERING SACRIFICE
From a drawing by Austin Abbey

Then Cain thought of his good brother's face that would never smile at his again; he thought of leaving his father's house and never again seeing his father and his mother; and he thought, too, of leaving God, because in those days men thought they left God behind whenever they went away from home.

And Cain said to God: "My punishment is greater than I can bear. You have driven me today from the face of the earth, and I shall be hidden from your face; and I shall be a wanderer alone." Then he thought with terror of the many strange and cruel faces that he would meet, some of them of men, perhaps, who had learned of the dreadful deed that he had done. And so he said, "And every one who finds me will try to kill me."

"No," God said, "I will let no one kill you." So God set a mark, or a sign, so that those who found Cain should be warned not to kill him. In this way Cain learned that, no matter what he had done, God was caring for him.

So Cain went away from God. And to Adam and Eve, the first father and mother, came this sorrow, that one son was dead, and another they would never see again.

Cain wandered far away, to the Land of Wandering, which is east of Eden. By and by some one loved him, for he had a wife there, and to them was born a baby, whose name was Enoch. Cain at last stopped his wanderings, and worked hard, and began to build a city. We think he must have loved his little boy better than he had loved his brother, because he named the city for his boy. And the city was called Enoch.

Cain was not wholly a bad man, and some of his grandchildren became useful and famous. One of them was the first of the brave tent-dwellers, and one was the first maker of music, and one was the first blacksmith. And there was one, a girl; all we know of her is her name, Naamah, which means, "Beauty."

As Cain went away from God, lonely and bitter, perhaps he kept on for a while excusing himself that it had not been his business to take care of his brother. But when he learned how beautiful life is, and how just by one blind, angry act he had taken his brother's life, his heart must almost have broken to realize what his selfishness had done. For we are our brothers' keepers, aren't we? And we must be, oh, so careful of brother and sister, and so watchful not to say the

JUBAL

From a painting by August von Kloeber

angry words or do the cruel deeds that will hurt them. For our Heavenly Father was right when he told Cain that sin is like a wild beast crouching outside the door, ready to spring upon us and throw us down unless we sternly drive it away forever.

> Sin croucheth at the door,
> But thou shouldst rule over it.

THE GREAT FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE

THE WONDERFUL PROMISE

YOU remember I spoke to you of a man who was the first of the great tent-dwellers. These tent-dwellers were interesting people. They took care of immense herds of cattle, and because they had to wander about so as to find pasture for their cattle, they did not build houses of wood or stone, but they lived in tents made of skins. Their wives and their children went with them. They were often very rich. They had plenty of servants to do their work, and they rode on camels from country to country. As they grew older, their children's children stayed with them, and the family became a whole tribe. But at the head of them all was the father of the tribe.

One of these rich and famous chiefs was called Abraham.

Abraham had married a beautiful wife whose name was Sarah, a name that means "Princess." After many years in his home country Abraham had heard the voice of God, and the voice had said to him, "Get out from your own country, and away from your own people, and from your father's house."

Now Abraham was not a young man and he did not know where he was to go, but he listened to the voice, and he obeyed. He took with him his nephew, whose name was Lot, and Lot's wife, and their children, and all his servants and all his cattle, and went away. Hundreds of miles this great company wandered. You can seem to see the great chieftain in front on camel-back, dressed in rich clothing, and carrying a spear in his hand. Next comes Sarah on another camel, sheltered under a canopy, and a long train of other camels and people behind. The servants go alongside on foot, and the cattle come along behind. They traveled far. At one time they went clear down into Egypt, near the palace of the king, and camped beside the Nile, where there was plenty of grain. But one day when Abraham was standing on a grassy hilltop where he could see miles and miles away, he heard the voice of God again. And the voice said to him: "This is the land I promised you. Go out and walk through the length and breadth of it, for it is to be yours and your children's children's forever." This country was a part of what we now call the Holy Land, but it is often called "The Land of Promise," because God promised it to Abraham and his people who came after him.

So they all settled down on the hilltop as their home. But not many days after, the herdsmen that took care of Lot's cattle had a quarrel with the herdsmen that were caring for Abraham's cattle. Now the great leader, Abraham, was a peacemaker, and he did not like quarreling, and so he called his nephew to him, and he said: "Let us not quarrel, for we are brothers. Look at this whole great country that is before you. This hilltop is not large enough for us both. Take whatever land you choose, and let us separate, and be at peace."

Then Lot looked, and he saw at the east a lovely valley, with rich soil and plenty of water. It was a much finer country than that rocky hilltop, and he chose that for himself.

But Abraham was generous, and he was glad to let Lot have the best. So Lot and his wife and his two daughters and all their servants and cattle went down into the valley to live, and Abraham stayed on the hilltop.

Abraham and Sarah did not have any children, and this made them sad. Not long after Lot went away, Abraham was sleeping one night when he heard the voice of God calling him. So Abraham got up and went to the door of his tent, to listen.

And God repeated to him again his wonderful promise, "This land is for you and your children's children forever." But Abraham said, "How can this land be for my children, when I have no children? There is nobody to take my place except my old servant here, Eliezer."

And God answered, "Look up. Do you see the stars? Can you count them? Some day your children and children's children will be more in number than the stars."

Abraham believed God. And God said further to him that he should not any more be called by the shorter name that men had used, that is, Abram, but he should hereafter be known by the name by which men have always remembered him; he should be called Abraham, for Abraham means, "Father of Many People."

THE BOY WHO MADE HIS PARENTS HAPPY

Although it was pleasanter where Lot lived, it was not so safe. Once five robber-kings came riding down into that valley with their soldiers, and they had a battle with the king of the city nearest Lot, and they carried off Lot and his family and everything that belonged to him.

Abraham at once called his shepherds and his other men-servants together, more than three hundred of them, and he gave them spears and bows and arrows, and they went hurrying up the valley after the five kings. Many miles away they caught up with part of their army, and one night they surrounded them when they were asleep, and chased them away, and brought back Lot and his people and his goods safely home again. Abraham, I told you, was a peacemaker, but the good old man could not let his nephew and his wife and the children suffer. He was offered payment for all his trouble, but he would not take a thing. "Let my young men have something, if you will," he said, "but do not give anything at all to me."

After he came back, one day Abraham was sitting in the door of his tent at noon, resting, when he saw three men coming on foot. In those times no stranger was ever allowed to pass without being shown kindness. So Abraham ran out to meet them, and he bowed to the ground before them, and he said: "Sirs, do not pass away from your servant. Let a little water be brought; and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will fetch you a little food, and comfort your hearts, because this is why you have come to your servant."

They said, "Do so."

Abraham called Sarah, and asked her to bake them a cake, and he went and got meat and butter and milk; and while they were eating he stood by them under the tree, waiting on them. As Abraham watched the noble strangers, he began to think that they were not ordinary men.

"Where is Sarah, your wife?" asked one of them kindly.

"She is in her tent," Abraham answered.

"Tell her," said the stranger, "that a year from now she shall have a baby boy."

Abraham had not forgotten the wonderful promise, and he knew that this message was from God.

When the visitors started to go, Abraham went across the fields with them to show them the way. At the top of the hill they all stood a moment, looking down to Sodom where Lot was now living.

"Shall we hide from Abraham what we are going to do?" said God. Then he turned to Abraham, and said, "Sodom is a very wicked city, and we are going down to destroy it."

"But you will not kill the good people with the wicked?" said Abraham. "Perhaps there are fifty good men there."

"If there are fifty good men, I will spare it," God said.

"But suppose there are forty," urged Abraham.

"If there are forty, I will spare it."

"But what if there are but thirty?"

BABY CAMELS

"If there are thirty, I will spare it."

"But there may be only twenty."

"If there are twenty, I will spare it."

"I will speak but once more," said Abraham. "Suppose there are ten good men there."

"I will spare it, if there are ten."

But the messengers found in the city of Sodom only one good man; that was Lot. So they warned Lot, and they helped him and his family to get away; and the next morning when Abraham looked from his hilltop down to Sodom, it was already burning with fire.

God did not forget his promise to Abraham, and within a year a little child was given to Sarah. And Sarah was so happy that she gave the boy a name that means "The Laugher." The name was Isaac. And Sarah sang:

"God has made me to laugh,
So that all that hear me will laugh with me."

As soon as the little boy was big enough to enjoy it, his father and mother gave him a birthday party.

It is God who makes us happy, and loves to see us happy; so I think we ought to learn and remember Sarah's song. Maybe you can make up some music for it:

God has made me to laugh,
So that all that hear me will laugh with me.

ABRAHAM'S TRIAL

Abraham had many happy years. His flocks and herds covered the hillsides. His many servants lived joyously around him. And the happiest thing of all was that his laughing boy lived in the tent with him and played around in the pastures while he and his wife, Sarah, watched him with smiling eyes.

Abraham was very thankful. For a long time he tried to think what he could do to show God how thankful he was. In those days people did not know that when we are thankful God is best pleased if we just pass on to others the good he has given to us. So Abraham thought he ought to pick out the very best thing he had and make a present of it to God. Now of course the best thing he had was his son, Isaac.

In those days when men made a gift to God it was usually the gift of some living animal. They would take the animal and kill it and put it on a pile of stones and burn it. They thought that God was hungry, and that the taste and smell of this burnt offering would be like food to him. In that country and at that time men sometimes gave their children to their gods in this way. So Abraham thought to himself: "If these men give their children, the best they have, to the gods of their country, I ought not to hold back my best, even my only son Isaac, from the God of the heaven and earth."

So one morning Abraham got up early, and he called two of his young servants and Isaac, and they took along some wood, and he rode on his beast to the mountain that he had been thinking about. On the third day, when they saw the mountain, Abraham told the young men to wait where they were while he and Isaac should go up the mountain to pray.

Abraham put the wood on Isaac's shoulder, for he was now a strong boy. Abraham himself carried some live coals and a knife, and they began to climb the mountain together.

As they walked along, Isaac said to his father, "Father, I see the fire and the wood, but I do not see the lamb for the burnt offering? Where is it?"

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC
From a drawing by S. Solomon

You can imagine what a hard question this was for Abraham to answer, for he expected that Isaac himself instead of the lamb was going to be offered to God. Abraham must have been thinking a great deal on the way about God, who had always been so kind to him, and who had told him that this very boy was going to become the father of many people. He must have wondered what God would do if Isaac were to be killed. Abraham said to Isaac, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." So they kept on together.

When they reached the place they were going to, Abraham piled up some stones and built an altar, and laid the wood on it. Then he tied Isaac his son, just as if he were a lamb, and laid him on the altar on the wood. And at length he stretched out his hand to take the knife — when suddenly he heard the voice of God out of heaven, calling, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," said Abraham.

"Do not kill the boy, Abraham; do not hurt him. Now I know how much you believe in me, because you have not kept back your son, your only son, from me."

Then Abraham turned around, and there was a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. So Abraham offered the ram instead of his boy Isaac.

Abraham gave that mountain a new name that means, "God will provide." And ever after that, whenever men went by the mountain, they used to say, "In God's mountain he will provide."

As Abraham went down the mountain, he heard the voice of God singing above him, and part of the song was this:

"Because you have not held back your only son,
Blessing I will bless you,
And your children and children's children shall be many,
As the stars in heaven,
And as the sand on the seashore."

So they two went back where the young men were, and they all went home together.

Thus Abraham learned that, when fathers and mothers give their dear children to God, he does not mean at all that they are to kill the children, but that they are to let them live, and make them as strong and as good and as happy as they can, so that these children may be able to love God for themselves. God wants to be loved by living children.

THE MARRIAGE OF LAUGHTER AND BEAUTY

I want to tell you a happy story about this Isaac whose father so nearly offered him for a sacrifice.

After Isaac became a young man, his mother, Sarah, died, and his father was now a very old man. Soon all the sheep and cattle and servants of Abraham would be Isaac's, but Isaac would be alone.

So one day Abraham called to him the best and oldest of his servants, Eliezer, who had been with him many years, ever since he had come out from the land of his fathers to the Land of Promise.

"I want you to promise," said Abraham, "that when I am gone you will not choose a wife for Isaac from the young women of this country. But you shall go back to the land of my fathers, from which you and I came together, and there take a wife for my son Isaac."

"But," said the old servant, "suppose I cannot find any one who will come so far to be his wife. Shall I take Isaac back there with me?"

"No," Abraham said. "This is the Promised Land; I want Isaac to live here. If he goes to the land of my fathers, he may never come back. The Lord God of Heaven, who took me from my father's house, will, I am sure, help you to find a wife for Isaac. But if she is not willing to come with you, then you may come back, and you shall be free from your promise."

So the servant made the promise as Abraham had asked. And Eliezer took ten camels, and some servants, and many presents, and started back to the land from which Abraham had come. It was a long journey, and it was weeks before the servant reached Abraham's old city.

REBEKAH AND ELIEZER
From a painting by Alexandre Cabanel

At evening Eliezer came to the place. He made his camels lie down by the village well, at the time when he knew all the girls would be coming out to draw water.

The faithful servant was very anxious, and so he told his plan to God. This is what he said: "O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, please help me this day. See, here I am standing by the well of water. Now when the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water, I am going to say to one of these girls, 'Let down your pitcher, please, so that I may drink.' If she shall answer, 'Drink, and I will give your camels drink too,' then let her be the one that you have chosen for Isaac. In this way will I know that you have been kind to my master."

Just then he saw a young girl coming down to the well to draw some water. After she had filled her pitcher, she lifted it to her shoulder, and was about to start away. Then Eliezer ran to her and said, "Let me, please, drink a little water out of your pitcher."

And the girl said, "Drink, my lord." And after she had given him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels, too, until they have done drinking."

While she was hastening to draw more water for his camels, the old servant looked at her eagerly. She was very beautiful, and she had been kind to him. Was she the one whom God had intended for Isaac?

As soon as she had done serving him, Eliezer went up to her and he fastened a golden earring and two golden bracelets upon her, for he thought these gifts would please her. And he said to her, "Whose daughter are you?"

When she told the servant that her grandfather's name was Nahor, Eliezer was delighted, for Nahor was Abraham's brother. So this girl was Isaac's cousin.

"Is there room in your father's house for us to lodge?" the servant asked.

"There is plenty of room for all of you," said the girl.

Then she hurried into her mother's house to show her presents and to tell who was coming.

Then Eliezer knelt down and thanked God, and he said: "Thank you, O God. You have been so good to my master, and so kind. I went along the way, and you led me to the very house of my master's people."

The name of the young girl was Rebekah, which means "Beauty." When her brother Laban heard what had happened and saw her presents, he hastened out to meet Eliezer, and said, "Come in! come in! why do you wait outside? We have the house all ready for you. There is also room for your camels."

They took care of his camels, and they asked him to sit down to dinner. But the old man would not sit down.

"I will not eat," he said, "until I have told my errand."

"Tell us at once," said Rebekah's brother.

"I am a servant of Abraham," said Eliezer. "God has prospered Abraham greatly: he is a great man, and he has

THE MEETING OF ISAAC AND REBEKAH

From a drawing by Gustave Doré

"He lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel."

many flocks and herds, and many servants, and much silver and gold, and many camels. And he has an only son, and this son is to have all that his old father shall leave. And my master made me promise not to take a wife for his son Isaac from the women of that country, but to go back to his father's house and to his father's people, and take a wife for him."

Then Eliezer told about his long journey, and how he came to the village well, and how he had asked God to show him which of the young girls he should ask for water, and how he prayed that her kindness to him might be the sign that she was the chosen one. Then he told of Rebekah's coming and of her kindness, and how he had found that she was of the same family as Abraham. "I bowed my head," he said, "and thanked the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, that he had led me in the right way."

He asked Rebekah's people then if they were willing to give her to Isaac. They were so sure that God had been guiding him that they all said, "Yes." So Eliezer brought out beautiful gifts and gave them to Rebekah, and he gave precious things to her mother and her brothers.

The next morning Eliezer said, "Now send me away to my master."

But her mother and her brothers said, "It is a long way. Let her stay with us a while, ten days at least."

"Do not hinder me," pleaded the old man. "The Lord has prospered me; let me go now."

"We will ask Rebekah," they said.

They called Rebekah and said, "Will you go with this man, now?"

"Yes," she said, "I will."

So she and her nurse rode away with Eliezer and his men. And as she was going, they wished that she might always be happy, and that her children should make many happy.

After many days the weary journey back to Isaac's house was nearly over. It was evening; and Isaac, who had been walking in his field, and thinking, had just come from one of his wells, when he saw his camels in the distance.

"Who is this man that is coming to meet us?" Rebekah had asked the old servant. "It is my master," Eliezer said. Then she came down from the camel, and put a veil over her face, for in those days a girl did not show her face to her husband until after she was married to him.

Eliezer told Isaac all that had been done. And Isaac took Rebekah to his mother's tent, and she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

After Abraham was dead, Isaac lived happily for many years with Rebekah. He stayed beside the wells his father had dug, for God told him to remain there in the Land of Promise. He had many flocks and herds and servants, and he reaped great crops of wheat and grass in the fertile meadows. God always blessed him, for he was a quiet and peaceful man. And God promised him, as he had promised Abraham, that his children's children should be as many as the stars in heaven, and that all the families of the earth should be made happy by them.

THE LITTLE BOY WHO BECAME A PRINCE

HOW JACOB GOT HIS FATHER'S BLESSING

ISAAC and Rebekah had two children. They were born the same day. The name of one was Esau and of the other, Jacob. When they were small boys, Esau liked to go off hunting every day; but Jacob would stay at home and play about the tent, near his mother. So Isaac liked Esau better, but the mother loved Jacob more. Esau was brave and generous, and Jacob was shrewd and selfish. Esau, being a little the older, was to have the birthright; that is, when their father died, he would have twice as many sheep and cattle and servants as Jacob. Jacob made up his mind to try to get Esau's birthright away from him.

One day when Esau came in hot and tired from his hunting, he saw Jacob cooking a pleasant-smelling stew in front of the tent.

"Give me your stew," said Esau; "I am so hungry."

"Give me your birthright," Jacob answered, "and I will."

It seemed to Esau that his birthright would be a long time in coming, but he was hungry right now. So he promised his birthright to Jacob, and then he ate up all the stew.

Now in those days a father's blessing was thought to be something worth even more than a birthright. If an old man said a blessing over his son, people thought it was like a wonderful promise that would bring all kinds of good. So Rebekah made up her mind that her favorite boy should get the father's blessing as well as the birthright.

Isaac, when he was old and blind, was very fond of the wild meat that his son Esau used to bring home from his hunting. One morning he asked Esau to go out hunting

THE MESS OF POTTAGE
From a painting by Tissot

for him and to bring him home some meat for his dinner. He told him that as soon as he came back he would give him the blessing. While he was gone, his mother saw that this was her chance.

She said to Jacob, "Now you go to the flock and get two little goats, and I will cook them for your father, and we will make him think that you are Esau, and we will get the blessing for you before Esau gets back."

"But," Jacob said, "Esau is a hairy man and I am not. If father should feel my arms or the backs of my hands, he would know that I am not Esau, and he might give me a curse instead of a blessing."

"Do as I say," said his mother, "and I will take the curse, if there is any."

JACOB DECEIVES ISAAC
From a painting by Tissot

When the meat was ready, Rebekah dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes, and she put some hairy goatskins over his hands and around his neck, and gave him the bread and meat, and sent him in to his father.

"My father," said Jacob, as he roused the old man.

"Who are you?" asked Isaac.

"I am Esau," answered Jacob, "your oldest son. Sit up and eat some of the meat that I have for you, and then give me your blessing."

"How did you find it so quickly?" Isaac asked.

"Because the Lord your God brought it to me," Jacob answered.

Of course this was not the truth.

"Come near to me and let me feel of you," the blind old father said, thinking somehow that all was not right. When he had felt of his hands and his neck, he said, "The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are Esau's. Are you really my son Esau?"

"I am," said Jacob.

"Then bring me the food and wine, and afterward I will bless you."

So after he had eaten the dinner that Jacob had brought, he had him come near him, and he smelled of his clothes, so as to be perfectly sure that he was Esau. Then he gave him this blessing:

"See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a
    field that God has blessed.
So may God give you of the dew of heaven,
    and of the fruit of the field,
And plenty of corn and wine.
May you be lord over your brother.
May every one be cursed that curses you,
And blessèd be he who blesses you."

Jacob had hardly gone out, pleased that he had tricked his brother, when Esau came hurrying in with the wild meat that he had brought from the hunt and cooked.

"Sit up, father, and eat of my meat, and then give me your blessing," he said heartily.

"Who are you?" asked his father.

"I am your son, your older son, Esau."

Then Isaac began to tremble with fear, and he said, "Who? Where is the one who just brought the meat to me? I ate it all before you came, and I blessed him. Yes, and now my blessing must remain with him."

Esau had forgotten how, many years before, he had given away his birthright, but he was wiser now, and he loved his father, and he wanted his blessing before he died. So he cried out bitterly and said, "Bless me too, father; bless me too."

But his father said, "Your brother has stolen away your blessing."

Esau said, "But haven't you kept just one blessing for me?"

And Isaac, his father, said, "I have made him lord over you, his brother, and I have given him the grain and wine and servants, and what is there left for you, my son?"

But Isaac thought a moment, and then he stretched his hands over his son Esau as he knelt down before him, and he made this prayer:

"May your house always have the fatness of the earth,
And the dew of heaven from above;
May you live by your sword, and serve your brother,
And when you are strong, may you break his yoke from your shoulders."

This prayer was meant to ask that Esau should keep on living the life of a hunter in the open air, as he loved to do, and that his brother should not always get the better of him.

Esau hated Jacob after that, on account of the mean thing that he had done, and he told him that, as soon as their father was dead, he would kill him. So Rebekah advised Jacob to go away quickly to the house of her brother, Laban, where, you remember, the old servant Eliezer had first found her. "Perhaps Esau will soon forget what has made him so angry, and then you can come back to me," she told him. You see that Rebekah, in her love for Jacob, had been just as wicked as he had been. On account of this evil deed, she lost her favorite child, Jacob, because he went away and she never saw him again.

THE DREAM OF THE HEAVENLY LADDER

That very day Jacob hastened away, and walked as long as he could, until night came. At night he lay down in a

THE LADDER TO HEAVEN

From a painting by Murillo

"He dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

lonely place outdoors, and had nothing but a stone for his pillow.

You can imagine how homesick the boy was, and how sorry that he had been so mean to his father and his brother, and how unhappy because he had lost his mother and his good home. Not only so, but he was afraid. You may remember that in those days when anybody went away from home, he thought he had left God behind. If even God could not protect him in this strange place, how helpless he was!

Now God had not forgotten Jacob. God loved him, although he knew how wicked he had been. God loved Esau too. And God knew that, while Jacob was shrewd and selfish, still, after he had learned his lesson, he would become a good, useful man. There was really more to Jacob than there was to Esau, although it is easy for us to like Esau better. Jacob was patient, but Esau, as we have seen, was impatient, likely to act before he thought, and often spoiling what he tried to do by his foolish, quick way of speaking and doing.

That night Jacob had a beautiful dream. He saw a ladder let down from heaven, and angels, God's wonderful messengers, going up and coming down the ladder, doing God's will. And God was at the top of the ladder, speaking to Jacob. And God said: "I am the God of your grandfather Abraham and of your father Isaac. Some day this land that you are lying on shall be your land, and the land to the east and the west and the north and the south of it shall all be yours. And you will have many children, and they will grow up to make the world happy. And I am with you here, and I will be with you and take care of you everywhere you go, and I will bring you back here some day; for I will never leave you until I have done all these things that I have promised."

Then Jacob woke up, comforted, and said: "Surely God is in this place, and I did not know it. How dreadful this place is! It is really God's House; it is the gate of Heaven."

So Jacob made God a promise, to show that he intended to be a better man. He took the stone that had been his pillow, and he stood it up to remember this place by, and he laid his hand on it, and this was the promise he made: "If God will be my God, and will take care of me everywhere, so that I may come back some day to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone shall be God's house, and I will give God a tenth of everything I have."

When you remember how Jacob had always wanted everything for himself, and how selfish he had always been, you can see that this promise meant the beginning of a better life. I want to tell you next how Jacob kept his promise.

HOW JACOB KEPT HIS PROMISE

After Jacob's long walk alone he came one day to the well in the town where his mother's brother lived. This was the same well where Eliezer had waited for Rebekah. It was noonday when he got there, and three flocks of sheep were resting there, and their shepherds were lying down under the trees. Jacob learned from them where he was, and when he asked after his uncle Laban, his mother's brother, they told him that the girl who was just coming with her sheep was his uncle's daughter. She was a very lovely girl, and her name was Rachel.

When she came to the well, Jacob asked the shepherds to help him lift off the great stone that covered the top of the well, so that she could water her sheep. But it was hot, and the shepherds were lazy and would not help him; so Jacob in his great strength rolled off the stone by himself, and helped Rachel water the sheep. While he was helping her, he told her that he was her cousin. You may be sure she was glad to know this strong, bright young man, and so she took him to her father's house, where he stayed a month.

When the month was over, his uncle Laban asked him what he would like to do.

JACOB

From a painting by Tissot

"I would like to stay here with you, and help with the sheep."

"How much shall I pay you?" asked Laban.

Then Jacob told Laban that he loved Rachel, and that if she might be his wife, he would be happy. Laban was as shrewd as Jacob; and when he saw that Jacob loved his daughter very much, he made up his mind to drive a hard bargain with him.

"If you will work for me seven years," he said, "I will give Rachel to you, and she shall be your wife."

Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed to him but a few days because he loved her so much. Laban was so very shrewd that he kept Jacob twenty years before ever he let him go. Even then he had to steal away while Laban was not watching.

After these many years Jacob took all that he had, and escaped by night. He had not gone far before he heard that his brother Esau was near by with a great number of his servants. Jacob was now a rich man, and he was afraid that Esau would remember all the evil that he had done to him years before and would take away all that he had, and would even kill him, as he had threatened to do. So he divided his company of servants and sheep and cattle into two bands, so that if Esau should attack one he might escape with the rest, and he knelt down and asked God to save him. "I am not good enough, O God," he said, "to have you help me, but you have done all that you promised me, for when I came over this river the first time I had nothing but a staff in my hand, and now I have these two great companies. Please save me from my brother, for I am afraid that he will kill me and all my family, mother and children together. Remember how you promised that you would take care of me, and that my children should make many happy."

God always keeps his promises, even if we do not.

National Non-Theatrical Motion Pictures, Inc.

ESAU THE HUNTER

Jacob then took out from his great herds more than three hundred cattle and other animals, and he sent them ahead with some herdsmen for a present to his brother Esau. He divided them into three herds, so that if his brother was pleased with the first present, he would be better pleased with the second, and even more with the third.

Then he sent his family a little ahead of him across a brook, and lay down by himself that night to sleep.

THE MEETING OF ESAU AND JACOB
From a painting by Tissot

While he was again alone with God, God sent him one of his angels to wrestle with him and try to throw him down. All night the terrible battle went on. Just before morning, when perhaps Jacob thought he was going to win, the angel barely touched him on his side, and Jacob was helpless.

When Jacob had fallen down upon the ground, the angel said, "What is your name?"

"My name is Jacob."

"You shall not be called Jacob any more," the angel said. "You shall be called Israel." Now the word "Israel" means "Prince." So the angel went on to explain, "You are going to be called Israel because you have fought like a prince, and you have won."

Jacob asked the stranger's name, but he would not tell him. But Jacob knew that this messenger was from God.

The next morning Jacob crossed the brook after his family. And already Esau was in sight. When Esau saw him, he did not wait, but ran and threw his arms around Jacob's neck and kissed him.

"Who are all these people with you?" Esau asked in a moment.

"This is my family, the children that God has given me," Jacob said proudly.

After Esau had welcomed them all, he said, "What are all these herds that I see?"

"They are a present that I have brought for you, my brother."

"I have enough," said the generous Esau; "you keep them yourself."

"No," said Jacob; "I am so happy that you are pleased with me and that I have seen you again that I want you to have them all." He urged Esau so much that finally he took them.

All that day the two brothers traveled on together, but the next day, because their herds were so many, they separated, so that there should be pasture enough for all their sheep and cattle.

Jacob traveled back to his home, where his father, Isaac, was still living. And when the old man died, Esau came back too, and together the brothers buried their father, sorrowing together because he was gone.

You remember about the place where Jacob had his dream of the heavenly ladder? Well, Jacob did not forget to go back there, as he had promised. He found the stone that had been his pillow, and on that very spot he built a place to pray to God.

For many years, until he was a very old man, Jacob kept on living in Isaac's home, with his many children and grandchildren around him.

God had kept all his promises, and Jacob became the father of that great people we call "the Israelites," from the new name, Israel, that God had given him.

THE MASTER OF THE LAND OF THE NILE

By Annie R. Butler

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

JACOB had thirteen children. Twelve of them were boys. The name of the littlest one was Benjamin.

Rachel died when Benjamin was quite a new baby. Jacob loved Joseph the best of all his children. He gave him a beautiful coat to wear. It was made of all sorts of pretty colors. It was something like mother's patchwork.

Joseph's ten big brothers did not like him to have that lovely coat. They did not want their father to love him so much.

One night Joseph had a dream, and he told his brothers what he had been dreaming about. He said, "I dreamed that we were all tying up grain in a field, and my bundle of grain stood up straight, and your bundles of grain all made a bow to my bundle of grain."

That dream made Joseph's brothers very angry. They said, "Do you think that you are going to be grander than we are?"

Soon after, Joseph had another dream. He told his brothers about that dream too, and he told his father about it. He said, "I have dreamed another dream: I dreamed that the sun and the moon and the eleven stars all came and made a low bow to me."

I am afraid that Joseph was rather proud about his dreams. Jacob did not seem quite pleased. He said to him, "What do you mean? Do you think that I and your brothers are going to bow down before you?"

JOSEPH REVEALS HIS DREAM
From a painting by Tissot

Joseph's brothers felt more angry than ever with him now. Do you remember about Cain? Cain got angry with his brother Abel, and at last he grew so wicked that he killed his brother Abel. Joseph's brothers were very much like Cain.

One day those brothers went away to take care of Jacob's sheep in Shechem. Shechem is a long way off from Hebron, but as there is plenty of grass there, and plenty of water, it is a very good place for sheep. After a little while, Jacob said to Joseph, "Go to Shechem, and see how your brothers are, and see how the sheep are, and then come back and tell me about them."

Joseph had to walk a very long way. It must have taken him quite two or three days to get to Shechem. And when Joseph got to Shechem, he found no sheep there, no brothers there. What could have become of them?

Joseph looked about, and looked about, but it was all of no use. At last a man said to him, "What are you looking for?"

And Joseph said, "I am looking for my brothers. Please tell me where they are."

And the man said, "They have gone away to a place called Dothan."

Dothan was about twelve miles from Shechem; so now Joseph had to take another long walk to try to find his brothers. At last he got near Dothan. It was on the top of a hill, and people on the top of a hill can see a long way off, and Joseph had on his pretty bright coat. So the brothers could see him for a long while before he came near to them.

What do you think the brothers said when they saw Joseph? Did they say, "How kind of Joseph to come and see us when we were so cross to him"? Or did they say, "How tired Joseph must be! Let us make haste to give him something to eat"? No, they were angry with him, and wanted to get him out of the way.

Listen to their words. They said: "Here comes this dreamer. Come, let us kill him. And then we will throw him into a pit [that meant a well], and we will tell our father that some wild beast has eaten him up. We shall see then what will become of his dreams."

One of Joseph's brothers was not quite so cruel as the others. He said, "No; we will throw him into a well, but we will not kill him." That brother's name was Reuben. Reuben thought to himself, "When the others have gone away, I will come and get Joseph out of the well; and then I will send him back again to our father."

And now Joseph had come close up to his brothers, and oh! how frightened he must have been! They seized hold of him roughly and pulled off his coat—the coat of many colors—and they threw him down into a well. The well

JOSEPH SOLD INTO SLAVERY

From a painting by R. Leinweber

THE DESPAIR OF JACOB
From a painting by H. Schopin

was empty; there was no water in it. And then those wicked brothers sat down comfortably and had something to eat, as if nothing had happened.

While they were eating, they looked up, and they saw some Arabs and some camels coming along. Where were those camels and those Arabs going? They were going to Egypt. They were taking sweet-smelling things, called spice and balm and myrrh, to sell to people in Egypt.

When Joseph's brothers saw the Arabs coming, one of them, called Judah, said to the others, "Perhaps we had better not kill Joseph. Let us sell him to those men." The other brothers thought this would be a very good plan. So they went to the well, and took Joseph out; and they sold him to the Arabs for twenty pieces of silver money.

Reuben was not with the other brothers when Joseph was sold. But soon he came back and looked down into the well. I suppose he thought, "Now I will get Joseph out, and I will send him back to our father."

But — Joseph was not there!

None of the brothers wanted their father to know what they had done; so they thought, "We will make our father believe that a wild beast has killed Joseph."

So they took a little goat and killed it; and they dipped Joseph's coat into the blood of the kid. Then they took the coat home to Hebron and showed it to their father. They said, "We have found this coat. Do you think it is Joseph's coat or not?"

And Jacob knew the coat directly, and he said, "It is my son's coat! A wild beast has eaten him up! Yes, Joseph has been torn in pieces." And Jacob cried very much, and he said, "I shall never be happy again."

All this time the Arabs were taking Joseph on and on— past Shechem, past his father's home, and over the wilderness to Egypt. And in Egypt the Arabs sold Joseph to an Egyptian called Potiphar.

THE GOOD SERVANT

Potiphar, the man to whom the Arabs sold Joseph, was a soldier. There were a great many soldiers who took care of the King of Egypt. Those soldiers were called the guard. They would not let any one come near the king to hurt him. Potiphar used to tell those soldiers what to do. He was called their captain.

When Joseph was in the land of Canaan, he used to take care of sheep. And now that he was in Egypt, he was servant to a soldier. I dare say Joseph often wanted to be with his sheep again, and with his father and little Benjamin. But he did not sit down and fret. He worked away hard; he was always busy. And God was with him, and helped him.

Potiphar could not help liking this good, industrious boy. And Potiphar saw that God was with Joseph, and that it was God who helped him to get on well with everything that he did. And Potiphar thought, "Joseph shall be the overseer of my house."

An overseer tells all the other servants what to do. And Joseph was made the overseer of Potiphar's house, and all the other servants had to do what he told them.

Potiphar was very much pleased to have such a good servant as Joseph. He let him take care of all his things, and he asked him no questions about them. He trusted Joseph, you see. But at last something happened which was very sad indeed.

Potiphar had a wife who was not at all good. She too liked Joseph; but she did not like Joseph because he was good, but only because he had a beautiful face — like his mother Rachel. And one day, when Joseph was busy doing his work, Potiphar's wife tried to make him as idle and wicked as she was herself. That was like the serpent in the Garden of Eden, was it not?

But Joseph was a good servant to his master, and a good servant to God; and he said to Potiphar's wife, "No. My master trusts me, and God would not be pleased if I listened to you."

Every day, for some time, Potiphar's wife went on tempting Joseph to be idle and wicked; but he kept on quietly doing his work. He would not even listen to her. He would not stay with her if he could help it. And at last, one day, he ran quite away from her, out of the house, because he did not want to do what was wrong.

That made Potiphar's wife very angry indeed, and she made up her mind to tell a wicked lie, so as to get Joseph punished. When Potiphar came home that day, she said to him, "Joseph behaved very badly when he came into the house today; so I would not allow him to stay."

When Potiphar heard that, he was very angry with Joseph, and he sent him to prison. The man who took care of the prisoners was called the keeper of the prison. And he fastened Joseph's feet so tightly that he could not run away even if he tried.

But God was with Joseph in the prison, just as he had been with him in Potiphar's house.

The keeper of the prison soon came to like Joseph very much. He made Joseph overseer of the prison and gave him the care of all the other prisoners.

Two men were brought one day to the prison for Joseph to take care of. They were two of the king's servants; one was his baker (that means his cook), and the other was his butler.

One morning, when Joseph came round to look at the prisoners, he saw the cook and the butler looking very sad, and he said to them, "What makes you look so unhappy today?"

And they said, "We have each had a dream, and there is nobody here to tell us what our dreams mean."

And Joseph said: "God knows what your dreams mean. Tell them to me."

So the butler told Joseph what he had been dreaming about. He said:

"I dreamed that I saw a tree with three branches; and I saw some grapes growing on the tree. And I took the grapes and I squeezed them into the king's cup; and I gave the cup into the king's hand."

And Joseph said: "I will tell you what that dream means. In three days the king is going to forgive you, and let you come back again to be his butler." And then Joseph said to the butler: "Please remember me when you get out of the prison, and be kind to me, and tell the king about me. For I was stolen away out of the land of Canaan, and I was put into this prison when I had done nothing wrong at all."

When the king's cook heard what Joseph said to the butler, he thought, "That dream has a very good meaning; now I will tell Joseph my dream." So he said:

"I dreamed that I had three baskets on my head, and the basket at the top had all sorts of things in it for the king to eat. And some birds came and ate up the things out of that basket."

And Joseph said to the cook, "That dream means that in three days the king will say that you must die."

In three days the King of Egypt had a birthday, and he made a feast for his servants. And the same day he sent two messengers to the prison. He said that the cook was to die, and he said that the butler was to come back to be his servant again.

Did the butler remember Joseph when he came out of prison? Was he kind to him? Did he tell the king about him? No. He forgot all about Joseph!

PHARAOH'S DREAMS

It was unkind of the butler to forget all about Joseph directly he came out of prison. But God never forgets his children. God remembered Joseph all the time that he was in prison, and at last God took him out of the prison.

The kings of Egypt were all called Pharaoh; so we shall call this king Pharaoh.

Now Pharaoh thought in his sleep that he was standing by the River Nile. And he saw seven fat cows come up out of the river. And the cows ate the grass by the side of the river. And then Pharaoh saw seven thin cows come up out of the river and stand by the side of the fat cows. And the seven thin cows ate the seven fat cows all up. Then Pharaoh woke out of his sleep. I do not wonder that he woke up when he saw such a strange sight as cows eating one another!

But soon he fell asleep again, and he had another dream. He dreamed that he saw seven beautiful ears of grain growing on one stalk — like the grain which I have been telling you about. And then Pharaoh saw seven very bad ears of grain growing up close to the good grain. And soon the seven good ears of grain could not be seen any more. They were all quite gone, and only the bad grain was left.

These dreams were very curious; and when Pharaoh woke up he thought, "I am sure that those dreams mean something. Oh! I do wonder what is the meaning of my dreams." And Pharaoh was quite unhappy because he could not understand what those dreams meant.

He sent for a great many wise, clever men, and he told them what he had been dreaming about. But nobody could tell Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams. And then, at last, Pharaoh's butler remembered Joseph, and he told Pharaoh about him. He said, "When I was in prison, I had a dream; and a young man in the prison told me what that dream meant. And what that young man said came true."

Then Pharaoh sent off to the prison. "Joseph! Quick! Run! The king wants you." Joseph must have been very much surprised. He made haste and put on clean clothes and cut his hair and beard. Then Joseph went in to the king.

When Pharaoh saw Joseph, he said, "I have dreamed a dream, and nobody can tell me what my dream means; but they tell me that you know the meaning of dreams."

And Joseph said, "No, I do not know what they mean. But God does; and God can tell the king the meaning of his dream."

So Pharaoh told Joseph the two dreams which he had had, and Joseph said, "God sent those dreams to show the king what is going to happen."

And then Joseph told Pharaoh that there was going to be plenty of grain in Egypt for one, two, three, four, five,

©*Donald McLeish*

SUNSET ON THE GREAT PYRAMID

six, seven years; and that then there would be no grain at all for seven years.

No grain for seven years! What would the Egyptians do without grain and flour and bread for seven years? They would be hungry and die if they had nothing to eat. But Joseph thought of a very good plan. He said to the king:

"There will be plenty of grain for seven years, and some of that grain must be put away. And then, when the seven years of famine come — when no grain grows in the fields—

©Donald McLeish

CHILDREN IN EGYPT

the grain which has been put away can be got out. And then the people can have that grain to eat, so that they will not die. Pharaoh had better find some wise man to take care of the grain and put it away; and all the people in Egypt must do what that man says."

Pharaoh and his servants thought that that was a very good plan, and Pharaoh said to his servants, "Do you think that we could find any man who is as wise as this man? God teaches this man what he is to do and say."

And he said to Joseph, "There is no one so wise as you are. All the people of Egypt shall do what *you* tell them. You shall be more powerful than anybody in Egypt, excepting the king."

And Pharaoh took his ring off his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand; and he gave him a beautiful dress to wear, and he put a gold chain round his neck.

And Pharaoh gave Joseph a beautiful carriage to ride in; and he said that whenever Joseph went out in the carriage, servants were to run on in front and shout. That was to show that a great man was coming, and to make other people get out of the way.

Pharaoh gave Joseph something better than a beautiful carriage or a fine dress. He gave him a wife, whose father was a priest and lived in a town called On.

So now Joseph had a happy home of his own to live in. And God sent him two little boys, and made him forget all his troubles.

But Joseph did not get lazy when he had all these good things. He did not stay at home always with his wife and his little boys. Joseph was a good servant to Pharaoh just as he had been a good servant to Potiphar, and he worked very hard. He went about all over Egypt to get grain; and then, as fast as he got it, he put it safely away.

At last, Joseph had such a great deal of grain put away that he could not even count how much he had.

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

Everything happened just as Joseph had said. For seven years there was plenty of grain in the fields. And then for seven years there was hardly any grain in Egypt at all. Soon the people of Egypt had nothing to eat, and they came to the king and asked him for bread. And Pharaoh said, "Go to Joseph, and do what he tells you."

So the hungry people went to Joseph. And Joseph got out the grain which he had put away, and he sold it to the people.

There was a famine just then in the land of Canaan as well as in Egypt. That means, you know, that grain would not grow in the land of Canaan, and that the people there had scarcely anything to eat. Joseph's grandfather, Isaac, was dead; but his father, Jacob, was alive. Jacob lived at Hebron, in the land of Canaan, where Abraham used to live. Joseph's eleven brothers lived in Canaan too.

One day Jacob said to his sons, "I hear that there is grain in Egypt. Go and buy some grain for us all to eat, or else we shall die."

So ten of Joseph's brothers took great bags, called sacks, to put grain in, and they went to buy corn in Egypt. Young Benjamin did not go with them. Jacob was afraid that something sad might happen to Benjamin if he let him go away out of his sight.

When the ten brothers got to Egypt, they came to Joseph to buy grain, and they made him low bows quite down to the ground. The ten brothers did not know Joseph. Joseph was a boy when they sold him, and now he was a man—the grandest man in Egypt excepting the king. And he was dressed like an Egyptian, and he spoke like an Egyptian. They could not possibly guess who he was.

But Joseph remembered his brothers quite well; and he remembered the dreams which he had had when he was a

©*Donald McLeish*

A SCHOOL IN EGYPT

boy about the eleven stars bowing to him, and about his brothers' bundles of grain bowing to his bundle of grain. He saw that those dreams had come true.

Joseph did not tell his brothers directly who he was. He pretended he did not know them, and he spoke roughly to them, and said, "Where do you come from?"

And they said, "We come from the land of Canaan to buy food."

"No," said Joseph; "you have been sent here to find out the best way of fighting the Egyptians."

And they said, "Thy servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. The youngest is with our father, and the other is dead."

And Joseph said to them, "Now I shall find out whether you are speaking the truth. One of you shall go back to the land of Canaan to fetch your youngest brother. And all the rest of you shall be put in prison until your youngest brother comes here."

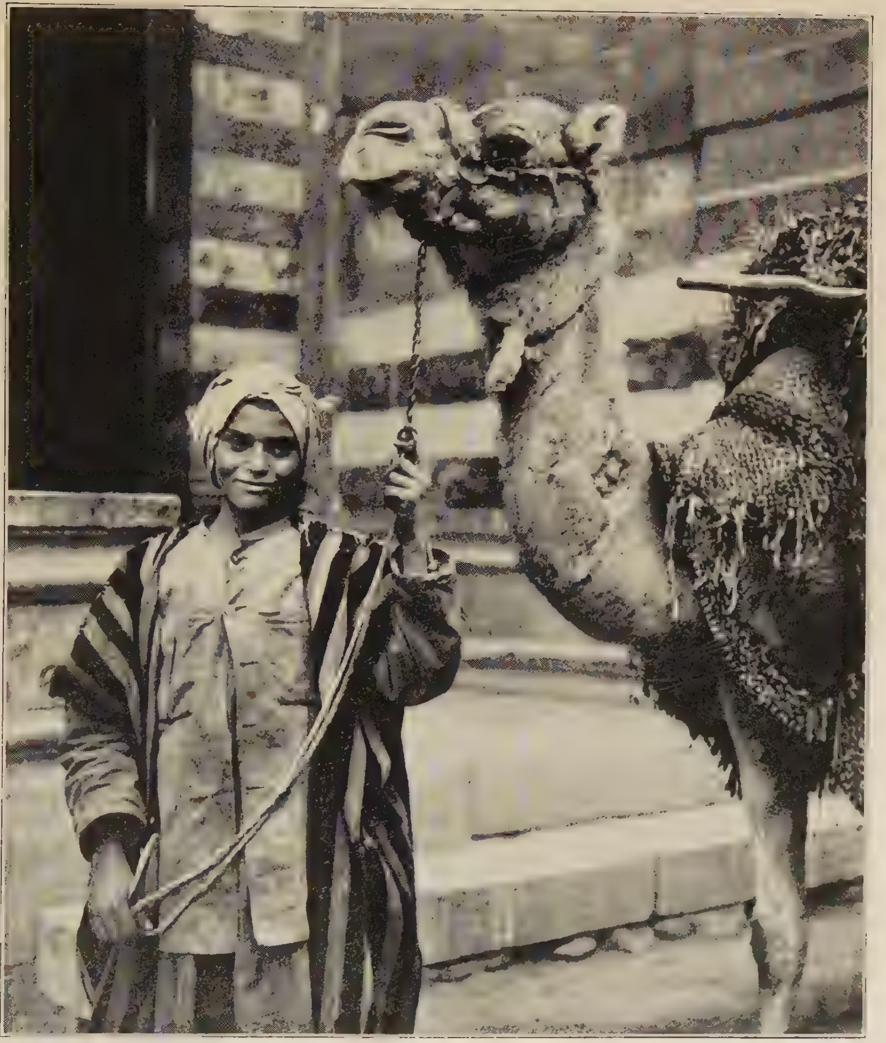
And then, for three days, Joseph put all of his brothers into prison. After three days he sent for them and said, "I fear God, so I will keep only one of you in prison, and I will let all the rest of you go and carry back grain to your hungry wives and children. But be sure that you bring your youngest brother with you next time you come. Then I shall know that you have spoken the truth."

When the ten brothers heard that, they said to one another, "Oh, what wicked men we have been! When Joseph was sold, he was dreadfully unhappy, and he begged us to let him go back to his father. But we would not listen to him. And now this man will not listen to us. It serves us quite right."

And Reuben, the eldest brother, said, "Did I not tell you not to hurt the child? You would not listen to me. And now God is punishing us all."

The ten brothers did not know that Joseph understood what they were saying, because, you see, they only heard him talking Egyptian. But of course he did understand them. And his heart was so full of love and pity that he went out of the room and cried. But he could not quite trust his brothers just yet. He wanted them to be really and truly sorry for what they had done. So, when he came back into the room, he talked to them for a little while, and then he took one of them and kept him as a prisoner.

That one was called Simeon. He had been one of the most wicked and most cruel of all the ten; so he deserved the most to be punished. Then Joseph told his servants to fill up his brothers' sacks with grain, and to put back the money which they had paid him into their sacks. And he told his servants to give the brothers some food to eat on

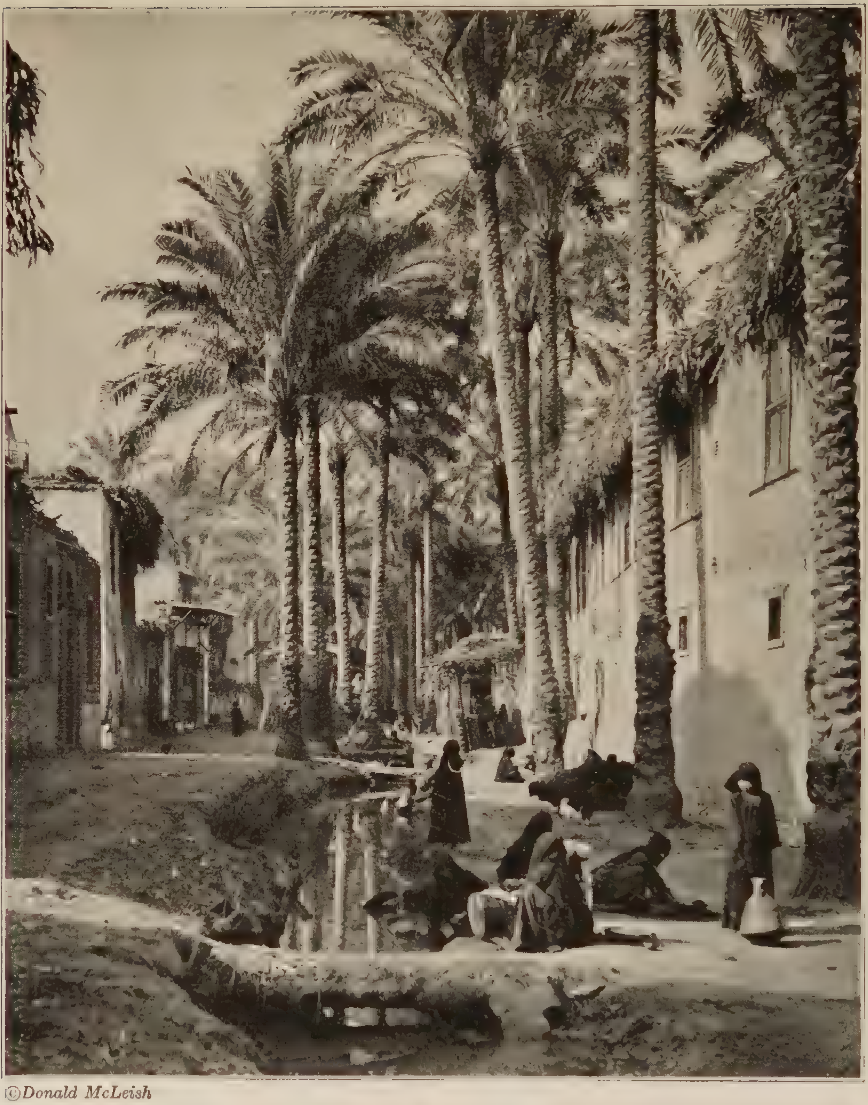


©Donald McLeish

A CAMEL BOY

their way back to Canaan. When the sacks were ready, the brothers put them on their asses and went away.

As they were going home, one of the brothers opened his sack to give his ass a little grain; and there, just at the top, he saw the money he had paid Joseph. And he said



©Donald McLeish

A VILLAGE IN EGYPT

to his brothers, "My money has been given back to me. I found it in my sack."

And the brothers were all surprised, and frightened too. They could not understand these strange things which were happening. And they said to one another, "What is this that God hath done to us?"

Then they came to Jacob, their father, in the land of Canaan, and told him all that had happened. And, as they opened their sacks and emptied out the grain, they found a bundle of money inside every one of the sacks! When the brothers and Jacob saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

And Jacob said, "You are taking my children away from me! I have lost Joseph, I have lost Simeon, and now you want to take Benjamin away. See how many sad things have happened to me."

But Reuben, Jacob's eldest son, said to Jacob, "When we go to Egypt again, I will take care of Benjamin. If you will only trust me, I will be sure to bring him back to you safely again. You may kill my own two boys if I do not bring Benjamin back safely."

But Jacob said, "Benjamin shall not go to Egypt with you! Joseph is dead; and if anything sad happened to Benjamin I should never be happy again."

But at last all the grain which had been brought from Egypt was eaten up. And Jacob said to his sons, "Go again to Egypt and buy us a little food."

Then Judah thought that he would try once more to persuade his father to let Benjamin go with them, and he said, "Send the boy with me, and then we will go. If we do not go soon, we shall all die — you, and we, and our little children. I will take care of Benjamin. I will be quite sure to bring him back to you safely."

Then Jacob said, "Well, if I must let Benjamin go, I will tell you what you must do. You must carry the man a present. Take him a little balm and spice and myrrh, and a little honey, and nuts and almonds. And you must take plenty of money with you to pay for the grain — more than you took the last time. And you must take back the bundles of money which you found inside your sacks. Perhaps they put the money in by mistake. Oh, I hope that God will make the man kind to you! I do hope that Simeon and Benjamin will both come back to me safely."

The men did what their father had said. They could not take a grand present to Joseph, because it was a time of famine — a time when people were hungry and poor. But they took with them a little balm and spice and myrrh, and they took a little honey, and nuts and almonds.

And they took the bundles of money which they had found in their sacks, and plenty of money besides that for the corn which they were going to buy. And then, when everything was ready, they got on their asses, they and their brother Benjamin, and rode away from Hebron. Over the hot wilderness they went, away, away to Egypt.

When they got to Egypt, the first thing they did was to find Joseph. When Joseph saw that Benjamin was with his other brothers, he said to the steward, or overseer, of his house, "These men will have dinner with me today at twelve o'clock. Take them home and get something ready for dinner."

The steward did as he was told, and brought the brothers to Joseph's house. He brought their asses there too.

The brothers felt very much frightened when they heard that they were to go to Joseph's house; and as they went along, they said to one another, "That man will say we stole those bundles of money which we found in our sacks. And then he will keep all of us here as his servants. And he will keep all of our asses here too. That is what he means to do. That is why we are brought here." And when they came to the door, they were afraid to go in.

What should they do? Then they thought, "This steward seems kind. Perhaps he will be our friend." And they came up quite close to him and said, "Oh, sir, we came to Egypt once before to buy grain, and when we had gone away we opened our sacks, and there was our money just inside the sacks! We have brought it back again, and we have brought other money, too, to buy some more grain. We do not know who put the money in our sacks."

And the steward said, "Do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father gave you that money. The money which you paid for the grain came safely to me."

Then the steward brought Simeon to them out of the prison. He also brought all of the brothers into Joseph's house. And he gave them water and washed their feet. But the brothers were told that they would have dinner at twelve o'clock with Joseph.

While they were waiting, they unpacked their presents and arranged everything all ready for Joseph. At last Joseph came in. And they took the presents and brought them to him; and they made him low bows quite down to the ground.

And Joseph said, "Are you quite well? And is your father well — the old man you told me about? Is he still alive?"

And the brothers said to Joseph, "Thy servant our father is quite well. He is still alive."

Then they all made him some more low bows. And Joseph looked round and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother Rachel's son, and he said, "Is this the young brother you told me about? God bless you, my son!"

But seeing Benjamin made Joseph cry, because he loved him so much. So he ran away into his bedroom and had a good cry by himself. And then he washed his face, that nobody might see his red eyes, and he went out just as if nothing was the matter, and said, "Bring in the dinner."

So the servants brought in dinner on a number of trays, and they put the trays on little round tables.

Joseph sat in a place by himself; and the Egyptians sat in a place by themselves; and all of Joseph's brothers sat in a place by themselves.

Joseph sent some nice bits of food from his tray to be put on his brothers' trays. That is what grand men in the East do when they want to be very kind indeed to people. He sent Benjamin a great many more nice things than he sent to any of the others. That was a very happy dinner party.

THE SILVER CUP

When dinner was over, Joseph said to his steward, "Fill the sacks of those men with grain, as much as they can carry, and put their money inside the sacks. And put my cup, the silver cup, inside the sack of the youngest, as well as his money."

And the steward did exactly as Joseph had told him.

The brothers were in a hurry to get back to the land of Canaan, and to their old father, and to their little children. So next morning, as soon as ever it was light, they went away, they and their asses.

How happy they must have felt! That grand man had been kind to them. And they had Simeon back again. And Benjamin was safe. How pleased their father would be!

But then, suddenly, they heard a noise behind them. Some one was riding along fast, fast, to catch up with them. It was the steward of Joseph's house, and when he came up to the brothers, he said:

"My master was very kind to you. Why have you behaved so badly to him? Why have you stolen his cup? That was very wrong indeed of you."

And the brothers said, "Oh, sir, what makes you say that to us? We would never think of doing such a thing. Why, you know we brought you back the money which we found in our sacks. It is not likely that we should steal gold or silver from your master."

The brothers were so sure that they had not got the cup that they said to the steward, "If one of us has got the cup, he shall die, and the rest of us will stay and be your servants."

The brothers were in a great hurry to show that they had not stolen the cup. They pulled the sacks down quickly from off their asses on to the ground, and opened them all. And the steward came and looked in Reuben's sack, and then in Levi's, and in Judah's, and in all of the others. And last of all in Benjamin's. And there the cup was found.

Then the brothers tore their clothes. That is what people do in the East when they are very unhappy. And they put the bags of grain on the asses again, and went back.

Benjamin was a prisoner now. He was taken straight to Joseph's house, and Judah went with him. Poor Judah! He had promised to bring Benjamin back safely. What was he to do? All the other brothers went with Judah and Benjamin. Ah! those brothers were beginning to love one another now.

It was still quite early in the morning, and Joseph had not yet gone out to business. When the brothers saw him, they all threw themselves down on the ground before him. And Joseph said to them, "What have you done? Did you not know that I should find you out?"

And Judah said, "What shall we say? How can we make you believe us? God is punishing us for something wicked which we did a long time ago. We will all of us stay here and be your servants."

But Joseph said, "Certainly not. All of you can go back to your father and be happy, except the one in whose sack the cup was found. He shall be my servant."

Then Judah came near to Joseph, and he said, "O sir, I know that you are as great as the king is. But let me speak to you. Do not be angry with me."

And then Judah told Joseph how dearly Jacob loved Benjamin; and he told him that Jacob would die if Benjamin did not come back to him safely.

And he said, "Let me stay and be your servant instead of Benjamin, and let Benjamin go back to his father. How could I go back to my father without Benjamin, and see my father die?"

Now Joseph saw that his brothers were really and truly sorry for the wrong things they had done. He saw that they really were trying to be good. And he could not pretend any longer. He cried out, "Let every one go out of the room." So every one went out of the room, excepting his brothers.

Then Joseph began to cry, and his crying and sobbing were so loud that the Egyptians who had been sent out of the room could hear him. And Joseph said to his brothers,

"I am Joseph! Does my father yet live?"

But they could not speak a word. They felt ashamed, and sorry, and surprised, and frightened. And Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near to him. And he said, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But do not be unhappy about selling me. God sent me here that I might get corn for you to eat, so that you might not die. It was not really you who sent me here, but God. And now, you must go back quickly to my father and tell him that his son Joseph wants him to come to Egypt directly. He must bring all of you with him, and his grandchildren, and I will take care of you all. See, it is really Joseph who is talking to you! Go home and tell my father about me, and tell him that God has made me a great and rich man, and tell him about all the grand things you have seen here, and then bring him back to me quickly."

Then Joseph threw his arms round his brother Benjamin's neck and began to cry again. And his brother Benjamin cried too. And Joseph kissed all his other brothers, and still he could not stop crying. At last his brothers left off

JOSEPH INTRODUCING JACOB TO PHARAOH
From a painting by Sir Edward J. Poynter

being frightened, and they all had a nice talk with one another.

When Pharaoh heard that Joseph's brothers had come, he sent them a very kind message. He said:

"Get your asses ready, and go to the land of Canaan. And fetch your father and your wives and your children and your servants, and come back to me and I will give you everything that you want. You shall have the very best things in Egypt."

And Pharaoh told Joseph to be sure to send carriages for Jacob and his little grandchildren and their mothers to ride in. Was it not kind of Pharaoh to think about the little children?

Joseph gave his brothers a great many presents before they went away. He gave them all some new clothes; but he gave to Benjamin a great many more clothes than he gave to the others. And he gave Benjamin a great deal of money as well. Joseph sent some beautiful presents to his father — things to eat, and all sorts of treasures.

And then Joseph sent his brothers away, and they went. But before long they came back; and they brought their old father, Jacob, and their wives and all their children, and they lived happily for many years near their brother Joseph in the land of Egypt.

THE BABY WHO WAS TAKEN OUT OF THE WATER

By Marietta Stockard

THE children of Israel lived for many years in the land of Egypt.

Joseph, his father, and his brethren died there. The king who had been their friend grew old and died also. Year by year, the Israelites grew stronger, richer, and more powerful. At last, the Egyptians grew jealous of them.

"These strangers have the best of our land," they complained. "They are growing so many and so powerful that they will soon take the whole land and will rule over us."

At last, King Pharaoh sent out a proclamation that every boy born in the home of a Hebrew should be put to death. He thought that in this cruel way he would stop the growth of these people. The poor mothers wept bitterly, and hid their children from the officers of the king.

Now, about this time, there was born in the home of one of the Hebrews, a little boy who was a strong and beautiful child. His mother kept him hidden until he was three months old. Then she grew afraid that the cruel Egyptians might come to her home and find him, so she went down to the river and gathered bulrushes. These she wove into a basket, or ark, and daubed it with mud and pitch, so the water could not come into it; then she took her baby boy and laid him carefully in it. She took the ark and hid it in the bushes on the edge of the river. His little sister stood afar off and kept watch to see what would happen to the child.

By and by, the daughter of Pharaoh and her maidens came down to the river to bathe. As the princess walked along the river side, she saw the ark hidden in the rushes, and she sent her maidens to fetch it. She opened the ark of rushes, and the child stretched out his arms to her. The princess lifted him from the ark and held him close to her heart. As she looked into his baby face, she was filled with pity and love for the beautiful boy.

"This is one of the Hebrew children," she said. "Some poor mother has hidden him here. He is a splendid child; I will take him and bring him up as my own son."

Just then the little sister drew near and heard what the princess said. Her heart was filled with joy.

"Shall I go and call a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?"

The princess smiled. "Go," she said.

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES
From a painting by Paul Delaroche

The girl ran swiftly to her mother and told her all that had happened. Trembling with joy, the mother hurried to the princess, and the child was placed in the arms of his own mother.

"Nurse this child for me and I will give thee thy wage," said the princess. "His name shall be called Moses."

So, loved and tended by his own mother, Moses grew up in the palace of the king, and he was treated as the son of the princess. He grew to be strong and powerful, but he never turned from his own people, the Hebrews. Long years after, when he had grown wise enough to be a great leader, he took his people out of Egypt, back into their own land.

Who will take the little baby?
"I," said the water deep;
"Baby will float in his little boat,
And I shall rock him to sleep."

Who will hide the little baby?
"We," said the rushes tall;
"Safely we'll hide the baby inside,
That nobody sees him at all."

Who will watch o'er the baby?
Miriam whispers, ‘I:
I'm sure to hear if the baby dear
Gives even a tiny cry."

Who will guard the baby
Out on the waters blue?
Silently sleep, baby, safely sleep,
For God will take care of you.

—*Songs for Little People*

THE YOUTH OF SAMSON

From a painting by Léon Bonnat

THE STRONGEST MAN

By Louise Seymour Houghton

ONE day an angel came to a man named Manoah and his wife, and told them that they should have a child who would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. Shortly after, they had a son whom they named Samson, which means "the Sunny," and indeed he was always a sunny-hearted man, fond of a joke, although his life was full of storms and troubles. Most of his trouble was with the Philistines, who were the enemies of Israel.

While he was very young, the spirit of the Lord began to move in him, and he soon showed a wonderful strength. One day a young lion rushed, roaring, upon him. The spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he caught the lion and tore him in pieces, although he had no weapon in his hand.

One time he went and caught three hundred foxes and tied firebrands to their tails, and let them loose in the cornfields of the Philistines and burned up all the Philistines' corn. Then the Philistines chased after Samson with a great army; and the men of Judah were afraid, and they delivered Samson up to the Philistines.

The Philistines shouted for joy when they saw Samson, but their joy was short-lived, for he picked up the jawbone of an ass that lay there, and rushed upon the Philistines, all unarmed as he was, except with the jawbone of an ass, and killed a thousand men.

After that, one day Samson went to one of the chief cities of the Philistines, called Gaza, for he was not in the least afraid of the Philistines. And when it was known that Samson was in the city, the Philistines lay in wait at the gate of the city, and they said, "In the morning, when it is day, we will kill him."

But in the middle of the night Samson got up and went out to the city gate. It was fast shut, and the men who were lying in wait for him were sound asleep. Then Samson lifted the doors of the gate off their hinges and carried them away off to the top of a hill. How surprised the Philistines were when they awoke! And Samson was probably much amused at having outwitted them.

After that, Samson loved a woman named Delilah, and the lords of the Philistines came to her and promised to give her a great sum of money if she would entice Samson to tell her the secret of his great strength. And Delilah begged Samson to tell her wherein his strength lay. Samson was amused at this, and thought it would be a good opportunity to play a trick on the Philistines.

So he told her that if any one should bind him with seven green withes that had never been dried, he would be weak, like any other man. Now Delilah had hidden some of the Philistines in her room. So she bound Samson with seven green withes, and then she said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" And he broke the withes like tow; and the Philistines dared not touch him, nor did they find out where his strength came from.

But Delilah begged Samson not to mock her that way, but to tell her truly what there was that would be strong enough to bind him. So he said, "If they bind me fast with new ropes, then shall I be weak, like another man." And Delilah had him bound with new ropes, and she said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" And he broke the ropes as if they had been a thread.

Then Delilah said, "You are mocking me: do tell me truly how you might be bound." So he said, "If you weave the seven locks of my hair into the web of cloth that is in the loom." Samson's hair was very long and thick, for it had never been cut since he was born. His parents had dedicated him to God as a Nazirite, and the Nazirites never drank

SAMSON GRINDING IN THE PRISON HOUSE
From a painting by A. G. Decamps

wine or strong drink, and never had their hair cut. So Delilah wove Samson's hair into the web which was on her loom, and she said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" Then he got up and walked away, carrying the web and the bar of the loom hanging to his hair.

Then Delilah seemed very unhappy because Samson would not tell her the truth. Samson loved Delilah very much, and he could not bear to see her unhappy; so at last he told her that if his hair should be shaved off, he would lose his strength. She saw that he was telling the truth, and she sent for the lords of the Philistines to come back; and when he was asleep, she had his hair shaved off. And then she said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" So he awoke, but he did not at first know that his strength had gone. Then the Philistines rushed upon him, and put out his eyes, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Gaza, and made him grind in the prison house.

However, his hair began to grow again. Then one day the Philistines were gathered together in the temple of their god, Dagon, and were praising their god; and they sent for Samson to come and make sport for them. When he was led in, they placed him between two of the pillars of the temple. Now the temple was full of the lords and ladies of the Philistines; and Samson prayed to God to strengthen him again only that once, and God heard him and gave him back his strength. Then Samson put his arms around the two pillars of the temple and bowed himself with all his might; and the pillars broke, and the house fell and crushed all the people. So the dead which Samson slew at his death were more than those whom he slew in his life.

THE STORY OF RUTH

By Blanche Winder

BETHLEHEM was one of the villages where the children of Israel settled. After a time, there was a bad famine there, and no one had anything to eat; so, many people left and went to settle in places where the harvests had been good. Among these people was a man called Elimelech, who went away with his wife, Naomi, and his two sons. They traveled a long way from Bethlehem, beyond the wild, deserted salt lake that is called the Dead Sea, into the land of Moab, where the hills, in the distance, look all red and strange. Elimelech settled there among the Moabites, and his two sons married two young Moabite girls, called Orpah and Ruth. But, before either of these young wives had any children, the sons of Naomi died. As Elimelech was dead also, Naomi and her two daughters-in-law were left quite alone in the world.

Naomi longed for her own beautiful country of Canaan and did not want to die in the strange land of Moab. She heard, too, that the Lord had been merciful to Bethlehem again, and that, once more, the people had grain and wine and oil. So she left the place where she lived in Moab and set out for her old home. Orpah and Ruth went with her. But Naomi did not think that these daughters of the Moabites could be happy in leaving their own people. So she begged them to turn back.

"Go," she said, "return each to her mother's house. And the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me! The Lord grant that ye may find rest, each of you, in the house of her husband!"

She kissed them tenderly, and they all wept at the thought of parting. Still Naomi urged the two others to turn back.

THE STORY OF RUTH

From a painting by T. M. Rooke

ELIMELECH AND NAOMI
From a painting by A. Bida

"Turn again, my daughters, go your ways!" she repeated. "I am an old woman. I only go to the land of my fathers to spend my last days among my own people!" And so, at last, kissing her mother-in-law, and weeping, Orpah turned back.

But Ruth would not leave Naomi, nor let her continue her journey alone.

"Whither thou goest I will go!" she said. "Where thou lodgest I will lodge! Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God! Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried! The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me!"

When Naomi saw Ruth's tenderness, she no longer tried to persuade her to turn back. And they came like mother and daughter to Bethlehem. There was, oh! such excitement in the little village as the people recognized Elimelech's wife. They said, "Is this Naomi?" But she answered sadly, "Nay, do not call me Naomi, but Mara, which means bitterness! For the Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me!"

Because, you see, except for sweet and faithful Ruth, Naomi had nobody near to her in the wide world, and, what grieved her most of all, no little grandchildren to carry on her husband's and her dead sons' name.

In this sad way Naomi and Ruth came back to the plains and fields of Bethlehem, just when all the people of the countryside were about to carry home the barley harvest. Among these folk were many kinsmen of Naomi's husband, and one of them, who was called Boaz, owned a great part of the land where the harvest was being gathered. Ruth asked Naomi if she might go and glean after the reapers. You know gleaners are the poor women and children who, before machines did so much work, used to go into the fields of the rich farmers, and, following behind the reapers, gather up the long stalks of wheat or barley or oats that the men let fall. In this way Ruth thought that she could get a little food for Naomi and herself to eat.

So, when Naomi said "Yes," Ruth went down the road to the barley fields, where the bearded, golden grain bent and rustled under the pale blue harvest skies. All about her were the reapers, cutting down the yellow stalks with their rounded, gleaming sickles, and binding them into long sheaves. It so happened that she went to a field belonging to Naomi's kinsman, Boaz, though she did not know this at the time. Presently Boaz came and stood among the busy workers and gave them greeting.

"The Lord be with you," said Boaz. And they answered, "The Lord bless thee."

Then Boaz saw Ruth a little way off, wearing the dress of her native land of Moab. And he asked the reapers who she was. When they told him he went away over the yellow barley stubble and spoke to her gently, telling her to go on gleaning in his field, for his servants would be kind to her

O-361

RUTH
From a painting by Brück-Lajos

and would give her water whenever she was thirsty. When she bent humbly before him and asked how it was he was so kind to a stranger, he told her that he had heard of her love and devotion to Naomi, and how she had come with her husband's mother into this land of strangers. "And," he added, "may the Lord repay thy work, and full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

Ruth was greatly comforted by these kind words. When they all sat down to eat, Boaz called to her, even more kindly, to come and join them. And he gave her parched corn—corn roasted on a sieve — which was a favorite food in Canaan, and she ate, and was grateful. After dinner Boaz told the reapers to let her glean quite close to them, among the very sheaves themselves, and to drop handfuls of good barley ears as if by accident, that she might pick them up.

The reapers did so, and, when night fell, Ruth found that she had quite a lot of barley to grind and bake with oil for Naomi and herself to eat. Naomi, when she heard Ruth's story and saw her gleanings, said, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead."

Now Naomi knew, by all the things Ruth told her, that the sweet young woman of the Moabites had, all at once, gained the love of Boaz, the kinsman of her dead husband. Naomi wanted Boaz to take Ruth to his heart and to make her his wife. But Boaz knew that Naomi had a nearer kinsman than himself who had the first right to take Ruth as his wife; and he said that this kinsman must say that he was willing before he, Boaz, could prove to Ruth the love he felt for her.

So, in the full sunshine of the morning, Boaz sat in an open place by the gate of the city. When the near kinsman of whom he had spoken passed, he called to him, and bade him sit down also. Then he summoned ten elders — wise old men who were to listen to what was to follow.

Boaz spoke to Naomi's kinsman and said, "Naomi, who was the wife of Elimelech, our brother, has come back to Bethlehem from Moab and wishes to sell a piece of land that belonged to her husband in Bethlehem. It is for you to say, before any one else, if you will buy it."

Naomi's kinsman answered before all the elders, "I will buy it."

But then Boaz went on:

"The same day that you buy the field of Elimelech you must also marry Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, so that her children may have the land that belonged to her husband, Elimelech's son."

Naomi's kinsman shook his head. "That I cannot do!" he said. "I have little ones of my own to take all that belongs to me. I cannot share what I have with the children of a Moabitess. Therefore buy the field yourself."

So Boaz said to the elders and all the people who were listening: "Ye are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was his son's! And ye are witnesses, too, that I take Ruth, Elimelech's son's wife, to be my wife. And her children and my children shall have all that was his."

So Boaz married sweet Ruth, and they had a little son. On the day that Naomi took the tiny baby into her arms, all the women who were her neighbors rejoiced with her. They said: "Blessed be the Lord that hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, whose name may be famous in Israel. And he – this baby — shall be to thee a restorer of thy life, to give sweetness to thine old age! For thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him!"

The baby's name was called Obed. And his son, when he grew up, was Jesse, the father of David, the shepherd who, as we shall see, became king over all Israel.

THE LITTLE BOY WHO WAS CALLED

By Blanche Winder

ONCE upon a time the House of God stood on the little hill of Shiloh, where great oaks grew wide and free, dropping their acorns upon the grass. In the oaks the turtledoves built their nests of sticks, and cooed softly over the pure white eggs. Big jays made harsh noises, and black-and-white magpies chattered back to the jays. There were black storks with homes in the firs, and common storks on the house-roofs; and fields of flax, where the flowers were as blue as the cloudless sky. Here was the very well where Jacob's sons had once fed and watered their flocks; and you might still see shepherd boys taking care of the sheep and lambs. But there were vineyards now, also, where the big leaves grew green and grapes hung in purple bunches from the brown stems. Little towers were set in the middle of these vineyards; and watchmen, in warm sheepskin coats, kept guard over the fruit all night. Great gnarled fig trees yielded green and purple figs; and the silver-gray olive branches trembled and shimmered in the sun.

An old man called Eli acted as high priest; but he was tired and sad and unable to stop the wickedness of the people. And Eli's sons were the most wicked of all. So it seemed as if Israel were lost to goodness forever. And then, one day, the presence of the Lord returned to the forsaken Tent at Shiloh. And it came back in answer to the loving worship of a little child.

Some of the people of Israel came up once in every year to Shiloh, to offer gifts to God, as Moses had taught them — barley and figs and olives, and sometimes goats or lambs.

Among these were a man and his wife from Mount Ephraim, on the other side of the valley. One day, as Eli, the old high priest, sat in a seat by the post of the Tent, he saw this woman, who was kneeling at the door of the House of God, weeping bitterly. Her lips were moving all the time as if she talked to herself; and after watching her for a little while, Eli asked what she was doing.

Then the woman poured out her trouble to the old priest. She had been praying for a child, because she had no little ones to make her happy. And she told Eli that, if God would only grant her a son, she would give the child to the Lord, to serve in the Holy Tabernacle all his life.

Something of the old spirit of power and grace filled Eli's heart. And he said:

"Go in peace! And the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of him!"

So the woman, who was called Hannah, went away, hopeful and rejoicing.

Well, after some time her prayer was answered, and Eli's blessing was fulfilled. A dear little boy was born to Hannah and her husband in their home on Mount Ephraim. The mother, in her joy, called the baby Samuel, because, she said, "That means 'Asked of God.'"

The next year Hannah's husband went to Shiloh as usual to worship and to carry his offerings to the Lord. But Hannah would not go with him.

"No!" she said. "The next time I go I will take my dear little son Samuel with me! I will show him to the Lord in the Tabernacle! And then I will leave him, that he may stay there and serve God forever!"

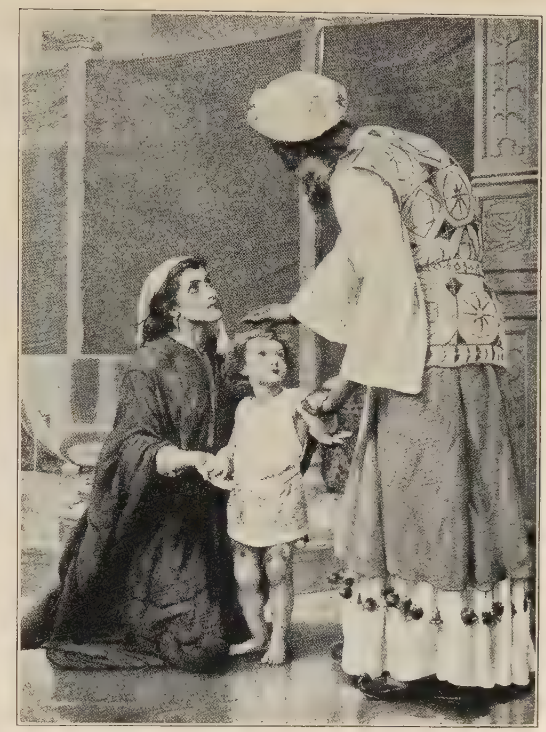
Samuel's father, who loved Hannah better than anybody else in the world, told her to do as seemed good to her, and to keep her promise to the Lord.

Then, when Samuel was a little older, just able to run about and play with the other children, Hannah took gifts of cattle from her husband's herds, and flour from the store, and a bottle of wine made from the sweet vineyard grapes, and went up to Shiloh. And she took little Samuel with her.

So Eli, one day, saw again the woman who had prayed at the door of the Holy Tent. This time she was bringing many gifts for the Lord. And the greatest gift of all was her tiny son.

She told Eli who she was. "O my lord!" she said, "I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord! For this child I prayed! And the Lord has answered my prayer! Therefore, as long as he lives shall he be lent to the Lord."

Eli looked down at the little innocent child. And Samuel gazed up into the old priest's face with earnest, surprised eyes. Then Hannah told her little son always to be good and to worship God, and she left him in the Holy Tent with the old priest, forever.



THE DEDICATION OF SAMUEL
From a painting by Frank W. W. Topham

But I do not think little Samuel was lonely. He lived among such interesting things, and he must have liked to look at the beautiful angels so cleverly embroidered upon the fine old colored curtains, and at the golden almond boughs of the great candlestick. He learned to mix the spices for the incense (the holy perfume that was burned on certain days) and to put it to burn in the censer, which was a beautiful vase of gold. Then he would pour the glistening yellow oil into the lamps, set a light to the floating wicks, and watch the flame shine out among the shadows till all was bright and clear. And he worshiped the Lord all the time.

SAMUEL PRAYING
From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

He wore a small linen ephod, which hung from his shoulders as if it were a tiny gown. And his mother, every year, when she came to Shiloh to worship, brought him a little coat that she had made for him. What a great day that must have been for Hannah and Samuel! How they would fit the coat on together, and see, by its size, how much Samuel had grown. And he would, I am sure, tell his mother of the beauties of the inner parts of the Holy Tent, where she herself had never been; and describe to her the angels, and the lamps, and the golden bells on the hem of the high priest's robe. Then he would kiss her good by, and wave his hand to her as he stood under the oak trees in the dying sunlight, and watch her going away down the mountain path into the dusk of the valley on her way home.

So Samuel lived — a little, sweet, pure-hearted child — among the fair, worn embroideries and old, mysterious treasures of the Holy Tent, passing busily through them in the daytime, and sleeping in the midst of them at night. He must have been like a spring flower in a grand, old, forsaken autumn wood! And the Lord saw him there and loved him and chose him for his own.

One night, then, Samuel lay down to sleep in the quiet shadows of the curtains, where the lamps of God were burning with a soft light before dying away into darkness. Eli, the old high priest, kept watch near at hand. But Eli's eyes grew heavy and dim with drowsiness, and presently his tired lids closed. And then Samuel, lying quiet and dreamy on his mattress, heard a voice in the Tent of God.

"Samuel!" called the voice, "Samuel!"

"Here am I!" answered little Samuel quickly, starting up. And he pattered across on his bare feet to Eli, for he thought that the priest had called.

But Eli said, "I called not! Lie down again!" So little Samuel went back to his mattress and lay down again.

Then, a second time, came the voice: "Samuel!"

Again Samuel jumped up and ran to Eli. "Here am I!" said the child earnestly; "for thou *didst* call me."

But still Eli said that the little boy was mistaken.

"I called not, my son! Lie down again!"

So, once more, Samuel went back and lay down. And the Tent was very still, with only the sound of the night breeze rustling in the oaks outside.

Then, a third time, the silence was broken. The urgent voice rang out again: "Samuel!"

Then, at last, Eli, when Samuel came once more to him, knew that the voice little Samuel had heard was the voice of the Lord, and that it was the Lord who had called the child. And he said, "Go; lie down! And if the voice comes again, say, 'Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth!'"

So Samuel lay down for the third time, and listened breathlessly. And the voice came to him once more, straight out of the Holy Place where the Ark stood behind the curtains.

"Samuel!"

Then Samuel, trembling, yet full of joy, whispered,

"Speak, for thy servant heareth!"

And, in the quietness of the night, the Lord told the child that great changes were to take place in Israel, and that those who did wrong were to make way for those who did right. Samuel listened earnestly to all that the Lord said to him. Then the voice died away, and, until the dawn came, all was quiet in the House of God.

In the morning, the child got up and set wide the doors, as usual, and breathed the fresh, sweet air. But the voice was clear in his memory. Only, as Eli's sons were those who did the worst wrong, he was afraid at first to answer the old priest's questions. But when, at last, he did so, Eli said with earnest faith:

"It is the Lord! Let him do what seemeth him good!"

And, after that night, the Lord appeared again in Shiloh; so the people in the valley knew that the Lord was teaching Samuel, as he had taught Moses in the wilderness, long before.

THE SHEPHERD BOY WHO BECAME A KING

ONE day the watchers on the walls of Bethlehem saw Samuel, while he was yet a long way off, riding slowly up the rough path, with his servant driving a cow before him; and they were afraid, for the old prophet was the chief judge in the land. Then the leading men of the place hastened out through the gate in the wall to meet him, and to ask if he came to them in peace.

He told them that he had come to offer a sacrifice, and asked them to wash themselves in the stream and to put on clean clothing, so that they might join him in it. Riding through the low arch in the walls, he asked for Jesse, a shepherd of the place; and when he found him, he ordered him and his sons to wash and dress and come to the feast also. Jesse had eight sons, and he was pleased that they should show themselves before the great prophet and judge of Israel.

The feast was to come next, at which the women would be allowed to serve the men; but before Samuel would permit it to begin, there was something else that must be done.

He called Jesse to him and said that he wished to see his sons. The people wondered why the feast was delayed, and what it all meant when Jesse called his sons forward by their names and told them to walk slowly, one at a time, past the aged prophet. First came the eldest, in striped cloak and gray tunic, carrying his thick war spear in his hand; and when Samuel saw his height and his fine face, he said,

"Here, surely, is the chosen king."

But the voice of God within him seemed to whisper, "No, God sees not as man sees; for man looks upon the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart."

By permission of the artist

DAVID THE GOOD SHEPHERD

From a painting by Edwin H. Blashfield

Then Samuel told Jesse that his eldest son was not chosen, and he passed on. Jesse next called up his second son, who walked slowly past the prophet, with sweeping cloak and club in hand, armed for the fight.

"Neither hath God chosen this," Samuel said to the father; and the second son passed on. Jesse then called forward the third, who also walked past the old prophet with head erect and spear in hand, hoping that he would be chosen.

"Neither hath God chosen this," was all that the grim old man said of him.

The people sat in the sunshine on the slope of the hill outside the village walls, shading their eyes and looking on in silence, until seven of the sons of Jesse, dressed and armed like chiefs, had gone slowly past the old man with the keen black eyes; but Samuel made no movement, and Jesse was deeply grieved.

"God hath not chosen these. Are all thy children here?" Samuel asked, turning sharply to the shepherd, who trembled as he replied:

"There remains yet David; but he is my youngest son, and he is watching the sheep."

David was down in the hollow with his shepherd's staff and dog and sling, playing upon his harp and watching from afar the fire and smoke and crowds, as he kept his father's flocks.

"Send and fetch him, for we will not sit down to the feast until he comes," was the stern reply. The brothers were angry at this; but one of them was soon leaping down the stony path to the valley, shouting with his hand to his mouth and waving a stick in the air to attract his young brother's attention.

The people waited in the sunshine, and soon they saw David, with his tunic pulled through his leather belt so as to leave his legs free, running swiftly up the hill. He came in his shepherd's torn and soiled clothes, and had to wash at the brook before he was fit to stand before the prophet.

When at length he drew near, Samuel saw a young man, not tall, but very strong, with light hair, ruddy cheeks, and bright eyes; and he thought the youth very good to look upon as he stood before him, dressed in his striped tunic and leather girdle, from which hung his shepherd's club, sling, and knife. Samuel looked at his frank face, and as he looked, God said to him:

"Arise, anoint him: for this is he!"

Going forward, the old man bade the shepherd boy kneel down and uncover his head. And David did so, taking off his bright kerchief, little knowing what was about to happen. Then, raising his horn before the astonished people, Samuel poured the sweet-smelling oil upon the young man's head, saying as he did so that God had chosen this young man to be king of Israel!

Upon this the people raised a great shout of joy, and Samuel gave the signal for the feast that was to follow. Then the men all sat down on the ground about the large wood fire, while the women came forward to serve them.

David, the shepherd of Bethlehem, was already a village hero, for one day he had killed a lion that sprang upon one of his sheep as they fed in the valley to the south, near the desert country.

He had also killed a bear that tried to seize one of his young lambs; for David was so strong that he could break an iron bow with his hands, and so swift on his feet that he could catch a wild deer in a race over good ground. He was not so tall as his fighting brothers, but he was stronger, and knew how to use the sword, bow, club, sling, and spear; for all the young men of the villages learned the use of these in their sports and games.

The lad was also fond of music, and he could play and sing. Sitting in the shade of a shadowy rock, or at the mouth of a dark cave, as he watched his sheep wandering to and fro in the sunshine, he often played strange music upon a rude

DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL
From a painting by Ernest Normand

harp that he had made; and he would sing songs about the white flocks and herds, the green hills and cool streams, the red-cheeked women at the well, and the young men of the village where he had his home. He was called the "sweet singer," and the people all around Bethlehem knew of his skill on the harp.

When he left his own village and went to live with Samuel's young men at Ramah, to learn to read and write, he learned also to play upon the pipe and guitar, the tambourine and large harp, and to sing, not songs of love and war, but praises of God and of his goodness to men. Under the teaching of Samuel, his heart opened toward God as a flower to the sun. Yet he did not always stay at Ramah, but often came back to his home to help his father and to watch the sheep with his brothers, who did not like him very well.

King Saul was now very unhappy, for the aged prophet Samuel would not see him, and the king felt that God was not with him; and he often had fits of sickness when he was in deep trouble, and only music could soothe his mind. Hearing that a harper was wanted for the king, one of David's friends praised his playing, his wisdom, his bravery, and his good looks, saying that God was with him; and when King Saul heard this, he sent a messenger to Bethlehem for the young shepherd-harper.

With his ruddy cheeks, and his long hair falling upon his blue tunic, David pleased the gloomy king as he stood before him; and when the youth played softly upon the harp and sang shepherd-songs of love, passing from these into songs in praise of God, the king loved the youth greatly and sent word to his father that he would keep David beside him.

Jonathan, the king's son, and Michal, the king's daughter, also learned to love the shepherd-singer as he went in and out before the king. Then Saul made him one of his fighting chiefs, who stood daily before him; and whenever his sickness came upon the king, he called for the shepherd-harper, and David played music both sad and gay until the cloud passed from the king's mind.

Once upon a time the Philistines gathered their young men and came, with their battle flags and drums, up the great Vale of Elah, the valley of oaks, to fight King Saul's people. Stopping at the village of Socoh, they set up their black tents among the thick bushes, camping about ten miles from the round hill of Bethlehem.

Then King Saul sent out messengers to sound the war horns up and down the valleys, and gather his fighting men to drive back their old enemies. Three of David's brothers took their spears and bows and joined King Saul; but David stayed at Bethlehem to care for his old father and the flocks.

In those days soldiers had to find their own food, and armies encamped before each other for many days before they began to fight. After a time Jesse sent David with donkeys laden with wheat and cakes for his brothers, and ten little cheeses for their captain. David led the donkeys through the hills and down the wide glen to the camping place opposite Succoth, where the king's men looked across the valley to the enemy on the opposite slope, while the river ran between.

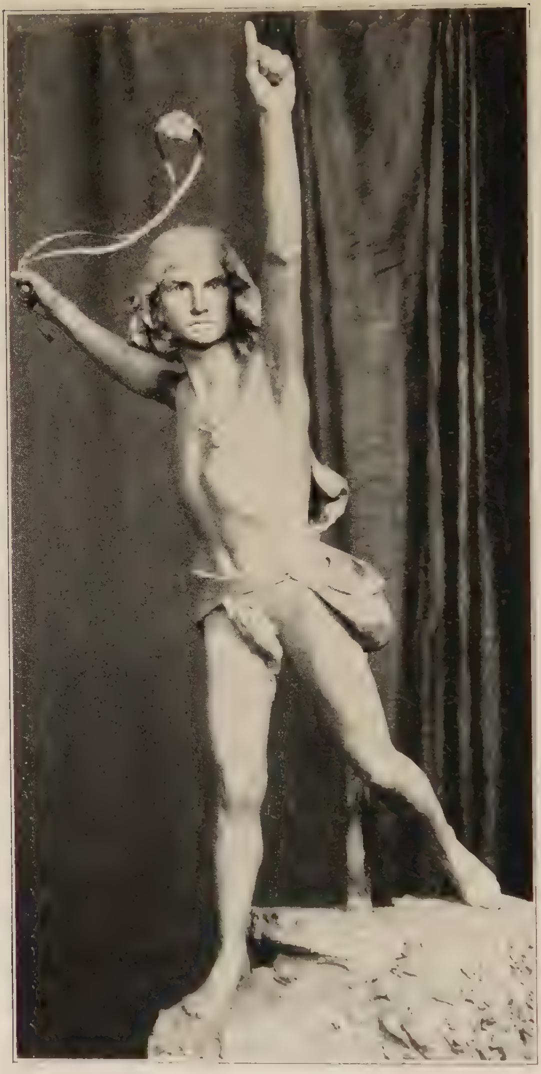
Then, one day, the Philistines sent out a champion, a giant named Goliath, of Gath, who wore a helmet of brass and a brazen coat of mail of very great weight. He had brass upon his legs, and brass between his shoulders. The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his shield-bearer went before him. This giant dared the Israelites to send out a man to fight with him. "If he be able to fight with me and to kill me, then will we be your servants," ran the message; "but if I kill him, then shall ye be our servants."

But there was no man found among the men of Israel who dared to go out against Goliath of Gath.

Then Saul made it known that whoever could kill Goliath should have great riches, should marry the princess, his daughter, and win great honor for himself and for his family.

Now when David reached the place with the food for his brothers, he was surprised to see that the men of Israel were so much afraid, and he asked, "Who is this Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" And those who stood around him told him how the giant warrior had come out day after day, and how the king had promised to enrich the man who should slay him.

Then it was told to King Saul how David had come and had asked about the king's promise. So the king sent for the boy; and when he had been brought in, David said, "Let no man's heart tremble, for I will go and fight with the Philistine." But Saul said, "Thou art not able to go out against him; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war."



DAVID WITH HIS SLING

From a sculpture by Blanconnier

"David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slung it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead."

Then David told Saul how he had killed with his own hands a fierce lion, and a bear which had stolen a lamb from the flock. "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine," he said simply. And Saul said, "Go, and the Lord be with thee."

The king then armed David with his own armor; but it was too heavy for the young man, and he said, "I cannot fight with these, for I have not tested them." So he took just his shepherd's staff in his hand, and, choosing five smooth stones out of the brook, put them in his shepherd's bag; and with his sling in his hand he drew near to the Philistine.

When Goliath looked at David, he was filled with scorn; for David was only a boy, as any one could plainly see. And with a frown upon his face he said angrily, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? I will give thy flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field."

Then David said to the boastful Philistine, "Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel. This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand; and I will smite thee and take thy head from thee. For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands."

Upon this the giant came near to meet David; and the youth made haste and took a stone out of his bag and slung it with such skill and force that it smote Goliath in the forehead and sank so deeply that the huge warrior fell to the ground. David then ran and stood upon the body of the giant and cut off Goliath's head with his own sword. When the Philistines saw that their giant had fallen, they turned and ran away.

From that day forward David was the hero of all the young men of the army of Saul.

NAAMAN'S WIFE

From a painting by Frank W. W. Topham

"She said to her mistress, 'Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy.' "

A LITTLE HEBREW MAID

AMONG the chiefs in the north country was Naaman, the Syrian, a young man who led them out to battle when the king could not go. And the king loved Naaman, the Syrian, best of all his soldiers.

Now when Naaman blew the king's horns and beat the king's drums up and down the country, calling the young men of the tribes together for a raid across the Jordan, it was either to steal cattle and grain, or to capture slaves; and boys and girls were the slaves they liked best.

One day, when he came back from one of these slave-raids, Naaman brought back with him a little Jewish maid; and she looked so pretty with her dark eyes and ruddy cheeks that he gave her as a present to his wife, to wait upon her and run her errands. When her mistress washed her hands, the little maid held the basin on bended knee. When she dressed her dark hair, she held the comb and the oil; and the little pots of yellow dye for her nails, and the black paint for her eyebrows. When she went out, this little maid went also, in a little red dress, with a white kerchief on her dark head.

She learned to love her mistress very much; and was sorry for her master, for he was troubled with the terrible sickness of leprosy, and she often wished he could be made well. One day she sighed, and said to her mistress:

"Oh, I would to God that my master were with our prophet in Samaria! then he would get better of his leprosy."

She believed with all her heart that Elisha, the prophet, could do something for him.

Now what she had said was told to Naaman, who told it to the king; and as they had both heard about Elisha, the good prophet of Israel, the king told his favorite chief to go and see the wonderful man. And he also wrote a letter to

Jehoram, the king of Israel, and gave it to Naaman to deliver; and this is what he wrote:

"When this letter comes to thee, O King Jehoram, it is to tell thee that I have sent Naaman, my servant, for thee to heal him of his leprosy."

Naaman folded the letter in his tunic, filled a few small bags with silver and gold, rolled up some bundles of new clothing, and put them all into the wide saddlebags of his camels as presents for the king of Israel. Then, stepping into his chariot, he drove down the river valley, with his men clattering after him, and up the hills to Samaria on the watch hill, where he delivered the letter.

The king of Israel read it, and his chiefs saw that he was much troubled. Seizing his white tunic with both hands, he tore it from neck to hem — a sign of great grief — saying bitterly that *he* was not able to heal people of leprosy, and that the powerful king of Syria was only seeking another cause to quarrel with him. What kings say and what kings do many tongues tell; and Elisha, the prophet, who had a house in white-walled Samaria, heard about the king's grief and sent his servant Gehazi to give him a message:

"Why do you rend your clothes? Send the man to me!"

The king was delighted, and soon Naaman's chariot and horses, his armed guards and his brown camels, were standing at the door of the prophet's house. But only Gehazi appeared in answer to the captain's call.

"Go," he said to the proud Syrian chief; "go and wash thyself seven times in the River Jordan, and thou shalt be healed, and be clean of leprosy."

This was a message from his master Elisha, who was not even coming out to see the great captain! The Syrian chief was filled with anger at the man who dared to send him away from the prophet's door as if he were a beggar, and he said:

"I thought he would surely come out to see me, and stand and call on his God, and wave his hand over the place and heal me. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?"

Springing into his chariot, he grasped the reins and shook them as he brought his whip fiercely down on the horses' backs, causing them to leap forward from the door. The horses galloped swiftly through the narrow streets and out by the gate in the city wall and down the road to the plain, the guard and servants of the great captain following swiftly after him. Naaman thought he had been mocked by this foreign prophet, and was galloping back to Syria as quickly as he could.

But horses cannot gallop forever, however angry their masters may be; and when, at length, they came to a walking pace, Naaman began to talk with his friends about the insult he had received from the old prophet. Why should *he* bathe in the Jordan River, where the water was clay-white and often muddy, when he had his own rivers of Abana, the golden, and Pharpar, the sweet, brimming with the finest water in the world? His friends did not answer him; but they soon reached the ford of crossing, and if he would not bathe in the Jordan, he would have to ride through it, for there was no bridge. Then one of his friends gave him this piece of very good advice.

"My father," he said, "if the propnet had told thee to do some hard thing, thou wouldst have done it. How much more shouldst thou obey him when what he commands is such a little thing as this."

Naaman's rage had passed off with the lashing of his horses and his furious driving, but his terrible leprosy remained. Was he going back to his master with the disease still upon him, to tell him that he had not done what the prophet had told him because it was too easy? There was the white river rushing past at his feet. To ride so far and then refuse to wash would seem very foolish; so he changed his mind, and, stopping his chariot at the water's edge, went into the stream and bathed; and to his surprise and delight he was at once healed of his leprosy, so that his skin became like that of a little child.

It was with a changed heart that he turned his horses' heads and drove slowly back out of the valley, and up the road to the hills down which he had just come clattering in his anger. When next he stood at the door of the prophet's little house, all the pride was gone out of him.

"Now I know," he said to the prophet, "that there is no God in all the world but in Israel. I pray thee to take a present from thy servant."

Elisha stood before him in a worn cloak and sandals, his head covered with a striped kerchief, his eyes bright and piercing. The camels were there, laden with presents.

"As God liveth," exclaimed the old man, "I will take nothing."

Gold and silver, fine clothing, sweet spices, scented oils, had no real value for him. They were only a few of the many things he could quite well do without. This Syrian chief had obeyed what was really the command of the living God, and that was much more important. The Syrian urged him to take something, but the poor prophet would have nothing. Naaman then asked if he might carry away two mule-loads of earth from Samaria. Probably he believed that if he could always stand upon soil that belonged to the God of Israel, the God of that soil would always take care of him. Also he said that he would never again offer sacrifice to idols after the manner of his own people, but would pray to God only.

Again Naaman shook the reins and cracked his whip as the horses sprang forward with the light chariot, the wooden wheels clattering on the stones. Outside the city walls his servants scraped the earth together until they had filled two mule-sacks, and then the small band of Syrians, shouldering their spears, set out homeward.

Soon the eyes of the Syrian drivers saw the green palm trees, the spires of glittering brass, and the white walls of Damascus. They were back again in their own country, bringing no camel loads of plunder, no droves of stolen cattle, no chains of weeping slaves — only two sacks of earth from Samaria, and a chief with a healthy body and a grateful heart. If his wife was glad to see him, so also was the little Jewish maid; and we need not doubt that she would not be much longer a slave, but free — set free as a sign that Naaman, the Syrian, had a grateful heart for his little friend who had sent him to be healed by the prophet of Israel.

THE CHARACTER OF A HAPPY LIFE

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill;

Whose passions not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the world by care
Of public fame or private breath;

Who envies none that chance doth raise,
Nor vice; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise;
Nor rules of state but rules of good;

Who hath his life from rumors freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great.

This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise or fear to fall:
Lord of himself though not of lands,
And, having nothing, yet hath all.

—*Henry Wotton*

A HERO WHO FEARED NEITHER MAN NOR BEAST

By Charlotte Chambers

THERE was a great stir in the royal palace of King Darius, especially among all the princes of the land, for the king himself had just sent for that stranger, Daniel, who had been taken from far-off Judah with many other captives, and everybody was anxiously waiting to hear what the king had to say to him.

"Daniel," explained Darius, "I have just divided my whole kingdom into many parts, with one of my princes to rule over each. Over all of these princes have I set presidents, and now I should like to place you in charge of all of the presidents to see that everything is carried on just as it should be."

"O king," answered Daniel quietly, "surely I am not worthy of such great honor; for lo, I am but a stranger in the midst of this people, and there are many mighty lords among the Medes and Persians who are far greater than I."

"That may be true," replied the king; "but I have noticed your deeds for many a day, how that all you do is indeed well done, and I have seen that there is in you a very excellent spirit."

There was a look of envy upon the faces of the princes, and yet they knew the king had spoken the truth, for this man who came from a far-off land and worshiped only one God, so different from all their idols, always seemed to prosper very much better than they did.

"This will never do!" whispered one, as they passed from the throne room. "What shall we do to catch this Daniel in some trap so that the king will give this honor to us instead?"

"That is easier said than done," replied another, "for he is always so faithful in serving the king that we'll never be able to find any fault with him!"

THE BOY DANIEL
From a painting by J. R. Herbert

"I have it!" cried a third. "There is indeed nothing we could complain about except that he worships a different God, and you know it is not lawful for a Mede or a Persian to hold up even any god as being mightier than the king!"

That very hour found these same princes again within the royal throne room.

"King Darius," began the one chosen as spokesman, in his very politest manner, "live forever!"

"What can I do for you?" asked the king.

"We have come, your majesty, to make known unto thee that it is the desire of all the presidents, the governors, princes, counselors and captains of this land that thou shouldst make a royal decree, which cannot be changed, even according to the law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not, that whosoever shall ask anything of any god or man, except of thee, O king, for the space of thirty days, shall be cast into the den of lions. Thus shall all be made to recognize that thou alone art mighty, O King Darius." Then the princes waited to see what the king would do.

Now, that didn't sound like such a bad idea to the king, for he hadn't been ruling very long, and it might be just as well to let everybody know how powerful he was so that they wouldn't take it into their heads to disobey the laws at any time. So he signed the decree these sly princes had made up, and sealed it with the royal signet ring so that it could not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

Then the crafty princes rubbed their hands together in glee and prepared to rejoice over the downfall of this new lord who had been placed over them.

Always three times a day Daniel went to his room in one corner of the palace to pray to his God, Jehovah; and although he knew of the new law, he was no coward when it came to doing what he thought was right. So, three times a day he went to pray, just the same as ever, and to give thanks to God for taking such good care of him in this strange land. Now, the princes knew of this and called others as witnesses to see how Daniel knelt by the open window as usual and prayed to his God instead of to the king only. And as soon as the witnesses too had seen Daniel, off they all ran to the king again.

"O king, live forever!" they panted, quite out of breath. "Hast thou not signed a decree that whosoever shall ask any petition of any god or man, save of thee, for thirty days, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

"It is true," replied the king; "I have made such a decree."

"Well," said the princes in their most important manner, "that Daniel taken from the land of Judah pays no attention to thee nor to thy laws, O king, but prays to his own God three times a day just the same as ever!"

Now, the king hadn't thought about Daniel when he signed the new law, and because he was so fond of this faithful man he tried to find some way of excusing him; but the princes would not agree to that for a moment.

"Remember," they said, "the laws of the Medes and Persians can never be changed once they have been signed by the king. This Daniel must surely be cast into the den of lions."

There was no help for it; Daniel had to go. But as they sealed up the door of the den so that no one would dare let him out, the king cried to his brave helper, "May thy God whom thou servest deliver thee, Daniel."

Then, sadly, Darius went back to his palace. Sending away all the musicians, he even refused to eat any food, and spent a very miserable night indeed, mourning for his faithful friend.

Scarcely had the dawn crept round again, when the wretched king went quickly to the den of lions and cried out with a sad voice, "Daniel, O Daniel! Is it possible that thou mayest still be alive,— that the God whom thou servest so constantly was able to deliver thee from the lions?"

Breathlessly he waited, listening for some faint cry. But none did he hear. Instead there came a calm, clear voice from within: "O king, my God hath indeed delivered me from death, for he hath sent his angel to shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was innocent. I have done no wrong either in the sight of my God, nor yet unto thee, O king."

The king's heart gave a great leap of joy. Quickly he ran to give orders that Daniel should be taken from the den. To be sure, there was not a sign of any harm done to him, because he had trusted God to take care of him. Then Darius commanded that great honor should be shown to Daniel, and he sent out messages to all his people that the God whom Daniel served was indeed the only true God, and that everybody should worship him alone.

CHILDREN OF THE BIBLE

Where the rushes bowed and quivered
O'er that tiny, fragile barque,
Pharaoh's daughter rescued Moses
From his floating cradle-ark;
But it was his little sister,
Watching them among the reeds,
Saved the future Hebrew ruler
For his people and their needs.

Through the shadows of the temple
And the silence of the night,
Where the solemn priest of Shiloh
Long had knelt in holy rite,
Came the voice of heavenly warning
And that message full of dread,
But it came to little Samuel,
As he lay upon his bed.

Naaman, the mighty leper,
Summoned to his palace gate
All the wise men of his nation,
To relieve his sad estate:
But it was the little maiden,
Captive of the Syrian band,
Told her master of the prophet
Dwelling in her native land.

Proudly stood the sons of Jesse,
Warriors brave and fair to see;
For they knew the one most valiant
Should the King of Israel be;
But it was the stripling, David,
With the blush upon his face,
Who was summoned from the sheepfold,
To protect a chosen race.

Scattered o'er Bethsaida's desert,
Hungry thousands waited by;
And the Lord's disciples murmured
There was no provision nigh:
But there came the lad with fishes,
And his loaves of barley bread.
Jesus, in compassion, called him,
And the people all were fed.

Weary was the world with waiting
For the coming of the King,
Who should all its evils conquer,
And the great salvation bring.
When He came, 'twas to a manger,
And a helpless Babe was He;
But of all the world, forever,
Shall that Babe the Leader be.

In the story of the ages
There are lines of tender grace,
Which our Father, in His purpose,
Let the little children trace:
Then, O Lord, may we be ready
To receive the call divine;
For we know our simple service
Is a part of Thy design.

—*W. H. Parker*

SOME OF THE STORIES JESUS TOLD

THE GOOD FATHER

ONCE there was a man who had two sons. The man had a great deal of money and many servants, and the sons had everything they could want, so they ought to have been very happy. The elder son was contented and helped his father, but the younger son was quite different. He didn't like work at all, he never wanted to do as he was told, and he was as discontented as he could be. "How nice it would be," he thought, "to have plenty of money of my own to spend just as I like." He wished, too, that he could go away from home where there would be nobody to tell him what he ought to do.

So, one day he went to his father, and said to him, "Father, give me my share of money which I should have when you are dead. I do not want to wait for it; I want it at once."

The father felt very sorrowful when he heard these words; but he said nothing, and gave his son the money he had asked for.

Now, as soon as the son had money to spend, he made up his mind to leave home at once and go far away into another country where he could enjoy himself and do exactly as he pleased.

At first, while his money lasted, everything went well. There were many people ready to make friends with him, and he had splendid feasts and all sorts of pleasure every day. Whenever he saw anything he wanted, he bought it. And, indeed, in every way he did just as he liked.

But this did not last long. Very soon the money was all spent, for he had wasted it sadly. Then there were no more pleasures and no more feasts, and all the people who had pretended to be his friends left him. He was now so poor that he had no money even to buy dry bread. He tried to

©Berger-Levrault & Co.

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL
From a drawing by Eugène Burnand

work; but the only work he could find was to go out into the fields to take care of the pigs. There, as he sat watching the pigs eating the dry shells of beans, he was so hungry that he wished he could share their food. And nobody gave him even so much as a crust of bread.

Then the boy began to see how wicked and foolish he had been. He thought of his kind old father who had never been harsh to him. He thought of the comfortable home where he had been so well cared for. Why, even the servants in his father's house were much better off now than he was. They always had plenty of food to eat, and good, warm clothes to wear.

He looked down at his rags and at his thin, toil-worn hands, and he said to himself, "I will go back to my father, and I will tell him how sorry I am, and ask him if he will let me be a servant in his house, for I am not fit to be called a son."

So he set out on the long journey home, and he was very tired and footsore, and so dusty and ragged that he looked like a beggar.

At last he came within sight of home, and he thought no one would know him. But his father saw him coming a long way off. He had often looked out along that road, hoping that his boy would come back; and the moment he saw that poor, tired, dusty-looking figure he knew that it was his son. He did not wait for the boy to come and tell him how sorry he was. Hurrying quickly out, he ran to meet him before he could reach the house. The son felt almost ashamed to look up, but the father put his arms around him and kissed him and held him close.

Then the son sobbed out all that he had meant to say.

"O father," he cried, "I am so very, very sorry. I have been such a bad son. I have wasted all your money, and I have done so many foolish, wicked things that I am not fit to be called your son."

"BRING FORTH THE BEST ROBE"
From a painting by Guercino

But the father never spoke one word of blame; he only held him closer and told him how glad he was to welcome him home again.

Then he led the tired, ragged boy into the house, and told the servants to bring the best and richest clothes for him and to make ready a splendid feast of welcome. "For this is the son I had lost," he said, "but now I have found him again."

THE KIND NEIGHBOR

THERE was once a man who set out on a journey *all* by himself. It was a lonely road by which he had to travel, and it led through rough, dangerous places where there were robbers lurking, ready to pounce upon any one who passed by.

So, when the lonely traveler came along this road, the robbers quickly spied him, and in a moment they rushed out and seized him. They took all his money away and even some of his clothes, and then they beat him and hurt him so badly that they half killed him. The cruel robbers did not care at all what became of the poor man they had robbed, but they left him lying there in the road, too much hurt to move or to help himself.

Not very long afterwards, a priest, one of God's servants, came along the road and saw the poor hurt man lying so helpless there. But as soon as he caught sight of him, he quickly looked the other way and hurried past as fast as he could on the other side of the road. "The robbers might be hiding close at hand," he said to himself, "and if I stop to help the man, they may rob me too." It was much safer for him just to think of himself and leave the man alone. So he hurried on as fast as he could.

The poor traveler lay there just as the robbers had left him, suffering and unable to move; and by and by another man came in sight along the winding road. He also was supposed to be one of God's servants; but he was afraid to stop and help the poor man. He did go over and look at him, to be sure, but did not touch him; he decided it was not his business to help injured people who lay by the roadside. So he, too, hurried on, just as the priest had done.

©Berger-Levrault & Co.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

From a drawing by Eugène Burnand

Then some one else began to climb the mountain road. It was a stranger who did not belong to that country at all. He was riding along on his donkey, anxious, too, to pass quickly over this dangerous road. But when he saw the poor traveler lying there so still and helpless, he stopped at once. He did not care if the robbers were close at hand; he felt that he must help the suffering man. Very gently he touched him, and bound up the hurt places, and did all he could to make the pain less. Then, very tenderly he stooped down and lifted the poor man in his arms and carried him over to where the donkey was standing and placed him on its back.

So, carefully leading the donkey over the rough road, he took the poor man to the nearest village where there was an inn for travelers. There he laid him on a bed and watched by his bedside all night. When morning came, he was obliged to travel on; but before leaving he told the people of the inn to take good care of the hurt man, and he gave them money to pay for anything he might want until he should be quite well and strong again.

THE SOWER

From a drawing by H. J. Ford

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow."

THE PATIENT FARMER

AS Jesus went about trying to teach the people how to be kind and helpful to each other, he noticed that some didn't pay any attention at all to what he told them, while others started out with great enthusiasm to do the things he said and then grew tired of it and fell back into their old evil habits again. Still others were so busy with the selfish little cares of life that they didn't have time to think about helping others. There were a few, however, who gave good heed to his words and did a very great deal of good indeed by living the way he taught. It seemed to Jesus as though his words were something like the seed a sower scatters, and in order to make the people understand better just how foolish some of them were acting and how much better it would be if they listened and did what they learned to be the best way, he told them this story.

Once there was a man who went out to sow his field, and as he scattered the seed here and there, it fell upon different kinds of ground. Some fell very close to the path where the farmer and other people walked, and instead of sinking down and growing, it just stayed on top of the hard ground where people trampled upon it, and what was left was soon pecked up by the birds that flew by. Other grains fell on rocky ground where there wasn't much soil. Up it sprang very quickly, but because it couldn't send its roots deep down without striking the rock, it soon withered away from lack of moisture. Still others fell where there were thorns growing, and the thorns grew so much faster than the grain from the good seed that it was soon choked out. But some of the seed fell on good ground and grew very well indeed, so that when the time came around to gather in the grain, the farmer found to his surprise that he had a hundred times more now than he had sown in the first place. And he was very glad that some of his seed had found good ground in which to grow and had brought forth such a bountiful harvest.

©*Berger-Levrault & Co.*

THE SOWER
From a drawing by Eugène Burnand

We are sowing, daily sowing,
Countless seeds of good and ill,
Scattered on the level lowland,
Cast upon the windy hill;

Seeds by idle hearts forgotten,
Flung at random on the air;
Seeds by faithful souls remembered,
Sown in tears and love and prayer.

By a whisper sow we blessings,
By a breath we scatter strife;
In our words and looks and actions
Lie the seeds of death and life.

THE HAPPY SUPPER

ONCE there was a man who prepared a great supper and invited many people to be his guests. When everything was ready, he sent his servant to say to them all, "Come, for all things are ready." But each one of them began to excuse himself.

One said, "I have bought a piece of land and must go to look at it. Please excuse me."

Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them. Please excuse me."

A third said, "I have just been married, and so I cannot come."

So the servant came back and told his master what they had all said. Then the master was very angry, and he said to his servant, "Go out quickly into the narrow streets and alleys of the city, and bring in here the poor and crippled, the lame and the blind people."

The servant went out, as his master commanded, and brought all these poor people in. Then the servant said to his master, "My lord, I have done as you commanded, and yet there is room for more."

Then his master said, "Go out into the country, in the lonely highways and beside the dangerous hedges where robbers hide, and invite more people; and if they seem afraid, *make* them come, for my house must be full. Not one of those whom I asked first shall taste of my supper."

So the servant went again; and he found the poorest of all people and those who were sick from lack of food and care and those who had done great wrong, and, although some of them were afraid and others ashamed to go to the feast, he made them all come. And they kept coming until there was a big crowd of people gathered together.

©Berger-Levrault & Co.

THE INVITATION TO THE FEAST

From a drawing by Eugène Burnand

So the great house was full; and the kind master was glad because they had come, and the faithful servant, too, was glad because he had brought them, and all of those poor and hungry and wretched people had a very happy supper together.

ANGEL WITH A VIOL
From a painting by Conegliano

THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

From a painting by Karl Theodor von Piloty

THE TEN BRIDESMAIDS

ONCE upon a time there were ten young girls who were invited to a wedding. They were going to be bridesmaids. Now, in the country where they lived, it was the custom for all the bridesmaids to form in a line and go to meet the bridegroom, each one carrying a little lamp to light the way to the bride's home.

So, when the time came, these ten went down the street with their lamps brightly burning; and because the bridegroom hadn't come yet, they sat down to rest awhile. But they waited and waited, and it grew later and later until, before they realized it, all ten of them had fallen fast asleep!

Suddenly there was a glad shout, "Behold, the bridegroom is coming. Go all of you to meet him!"

Then hastily the bridesmaids arose and picked up their little lamps to trim the wicks that they might burn as brightly as possible. But in the meantime, five of the ten lamps had burnt quite out, for the owners had just taken them along as they were without taking care to have them well filled with oil.

So these five thoughtless girls said to the other five, "Oh, please give us some of the oil from your lamps; for ours have all gone out, and we must have a bright light to greet the bridegroom."

"Alas, no," said the five wise maidens, "that would never do; for if we divided our small amount of oil, neither you nor we should have enough to last, and then there would be nobody to meet the bridegroom. The best thing for you to do now is to go and buy some for yourselves."

So off the five foolish girls ran as fast as they could to buy more oil for their lamps. But while they were gone, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding. Then, when they were all inside, the door was shut to keep away those who had not been invited.

Not so very long after, back came the five girls who had been so careless in the first place; and upon seeing the shut door and hearing all the sounds of rejoicing inside, they knocked loudly and cried out, "Let us in; oh, let us in, for we, too, are bridesmaids and were invited to the wedding!"

But nobody believed them, and they all thought it must be somebody who had no right there, since every one else had gone in with the bridegroom when the time came.

So, all on account of their carelessness, these five girls had to go back home again. But inside, where all was bright and gay, the five wise bridesmaids were having a very fine time with all of the other guests, and they felt very happy to think they had taken good care before starting out to see to it that their lamps were well filled.

THE THREE SERVANTS

ONCE there was a man who was preparing to start on a long journey into a far country. Just before leaving, he called his servants to him and divided among them a certain amount of his wealth. To the first he gave five talents of silver; to the second, two; and to the third, one — according to what he thought they were able to take care of. Then, after bidding them farewell, he set off on his travels.

Now, while he was gone, the first servant went out into the market place and bought some goods of a merchant. "For," he thought to himself, "I must make the very best use of this money the master has entrusted to my care, so that when he comes back I shall be able to give him, not only every penny of what he gave me, but a lot more besides that I have earned with his money; for that is what every faithful servant should do."

So, by buying a lot of goods at once, he was able to get them very cheap; and then he set up his stall in the market place and made his wares look so very attractive that he soon had all the customers he could wait on. He made a little money on each thing he sold. So he kept buying more as fast as he sold out what he had, and he was so very industrious and helpful to all who came to buy that people soon began to tell each other about this new merchant who had such fine things to sell.

Also the second servant went into the market place and did just about the same as the first; for he, too, wanted to make the very best use of his money. Only, of course, he didn't have quite as much to start with, you remember, so he couldn't make as much as the first man. However, he did the very best he could. He worked hard buying things and then selling them to people who needed them.

A PARABLE

From a drawing by Eugène Burnand

Now, the third servant was not at all like the other two. Perhaps he felt angry to think he had received only one talent of silver; but instead of going out and making the most of that one for his master, what do you suppose he did? He went out to the garden, dug a hole in the ground, and buried the money out of sight, where it couldn't do anybody any good at all!

"There," he said to himself, "now I won't have to be bothered working hard down at the market place as those other foolish servants are doing! I can just take things easy now that the master is away, and when he comes back he can have his money safely back again without any trouble on my part!"

In the meantime, the master finished his business in the far country, and, not long after, the day came when he arrived home again. Although he had been gone a very long time, the first two servants had been so busy and happy in their trading that it seemed no time at all since he set out.

The first thing he did was to call his three servants together; and to the first he said, "Do you remember the five talents I gave you when I went away? I should like to have you tell me now what you did with them."

"Oh," replied the servant, "just as soon as you left, I went down to the market place and set up a little business of my own; and do you know, I had so much trade that I have twice as much now as you gave me in the first place!"

"Why!" said his master, "that's very fine, I'm sure. You must have worked very hard to do that! But I knew you would or I shouldn't have given you the money to take care of for me. And now, since you have been so faithful in this small matter, I see I can trust you with things that are much greater, for you are worthy to enjoy all that I have."

And, turning to the second servant, he said, "How did you get along with your two talents?" Then the servant was glad that he had tried hard and could make a good report.

"I, too, master, like my fellow-servant, have been able by working in the market to earn as much more as you left with me."

"Well done!" was the reply. "You, too, shall have your share of all that I possess."

Then, looking at the third servant, the master asked him the same question, as to how he had spent his time and money. But this man had quite a different story to tell, as you may well imagine, and tried hard to think up some excuse for not having a better report.

"Lord," he said, "I know all about your ways of doing things, how you are always ready to take back more money than you gave out, as in the case of these servants of yours. Therefore, I decided not to have anything whatsoever to do with your money, so I went and hid it in the ground. Now

THE HIDDEN TREASURE
From a drawing by Isings

you can have back just what you gave out, for that is all that belongs to you."

"Why!" exclaimed the master in amazement. "You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew all these things and were not industrious enough to use my money yourself, you should at least have given it into the hands of somebody else who would make good use of it. Then, when I came back, I'd have what money rightly belongs to me and as much more as it should have been making in the meantime as well! So now you must lose what little I gave you as a test, for if you could not be trusted with that small amount, you surely are not worthy of more of my property."

Then, turning to those standing near, the master said, "Go, find the money this wicked servant has hidden, and give it instead to that servant who is best able to take care of it."

So they dug up the one talent and gave it to the first servant, who had proved himself so well able to take care of his master's goods; and from that time forth both he and his fellow-worker were permitted to enjoy all that their master had, because they had proved themselves faithful in taking care of the smaller things.

THE HOLY CHILD
From a painting by Carlo Maratta

In Praise of Little Children

The earth, which feels the flowering of a thorn,
Was glad, O little child, when you were born;
The earth, which thrills when skylarks scale the blue,
Soared up itself to God's own heaven in you;

And heaven, which loves to lean down and to glass
Its beauty in each dewdrop on the grass,—
Heaven laughed to find your face so pure and fair,
And left, O little child, its reflex there.

—*William Canton*

INTERESTING PAGES FROM GOD'S BOOK

THE LORD IS OUR SHEPHERD

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for
his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence
of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all
the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd;
He shall gather the lambs with his arm,
And carry them in his bosom,
And gently lead those that have their young.

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is
among his sheep that are scattered,
So will I seek out my sheep,

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

From a painting by Christian Dietrich

And will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered
In the cloudy and dark day.
"I will feed my flock,
And cause them to lie down," saith the Lord God.
"And I will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land:
And they shall dwell safely in the wilderness,
And sleep in the woods."

Jesus once told a little story to show that God, our Shepherd, loves each one of us so much that he will follow after us, just as if we were the one lost sheep out of a great sheepfold where there are many sheep that do not go astray!

What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."

He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.

Verily, verily, I say to you, I am the Door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

SHEEP IN THE PASTURE

From a painting by Stefano Bruzzio

JOHN THE BAPTIST AS A CHILD
From a painting by Paul Baudry

I am the Door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

I am the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own sheep they are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.

GOD IS OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

Our Father who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.

Like as a father pitieth his children,
So the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

When thou prayest, enter into thy closet:
And when thou hast shut thy door,
Pray to thy Father who is in secret;
And thy Father who seeth in secret shall
reward thee openly.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

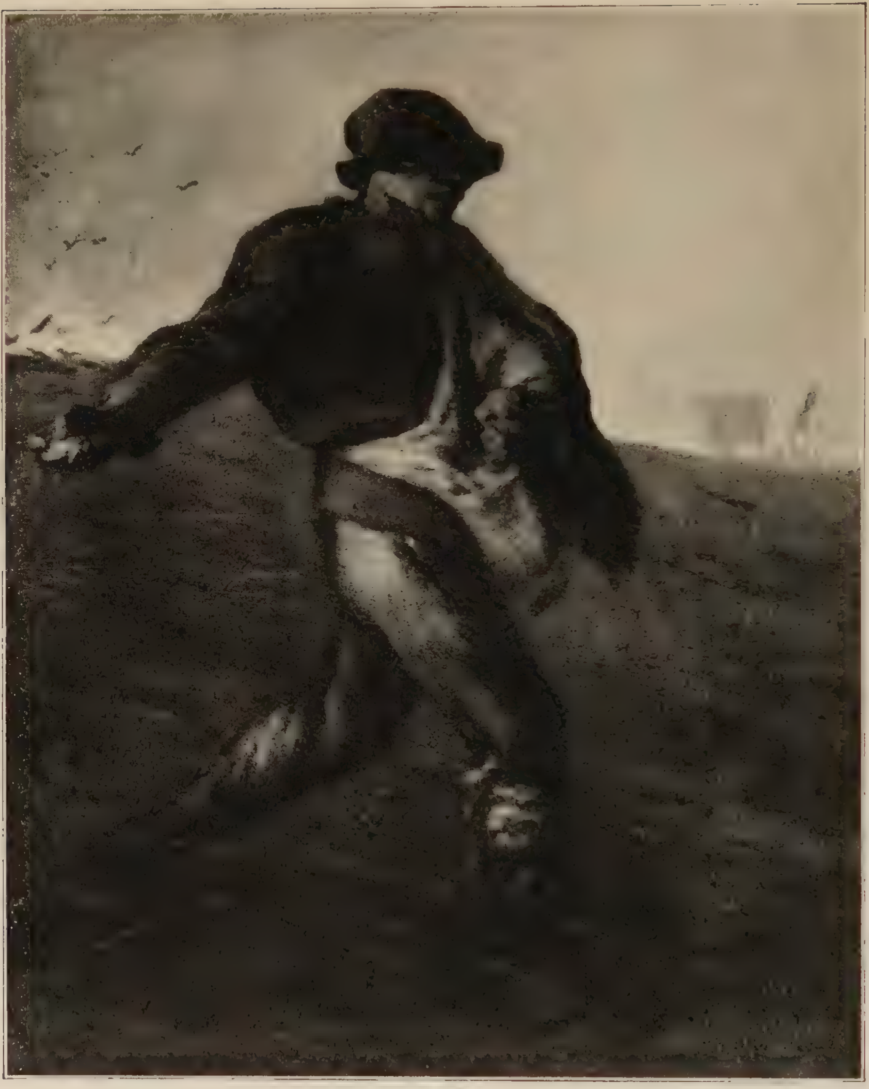
Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in Heaven. It is not the will of your Father who is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?

Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

Or if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion?

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?



THE SOWER
From a painting by Millet

Forth to the field in spring he goes,
And his seed well scattered leaves;
And he shall return at summer's close
To bring in his golden sheaves.

Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say to you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

If then God so clothed the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

* * *

Behold the sower went forth to sow; and, as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the birds came and devoured them: and others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth; and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth, and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them: and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

* * *

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. Beloved, now are we children of God.

CARITAS

From a painting by Abbott H. Thayer

GOD IS OUR HELPER

Behold, God is my helper.

I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

The Lord is my helper; I will not fear:
What can man do unto me?

The God of my father was my help.

I was brought low, and He helped me.
For thou hast delivered my soul from death
Mine eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore will we not fear, though the
earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried
into the midst of the sea.
The Lord of hosts is with us,
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped;
Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth;
And with my song will I praise Him.

God Is Love

A little child may know
Our Father's Name of love;
'Tis written on the earth below,
And on the sky above.

Around me when I look,
His handiwork I see;
This world is like a picture book
To teach His name to me.

The thousand little flowers
Within our garden found,
The rainbow and the soft spring showers,
And every pleasant sound,

The birds that sweetly sing,
The moon that shines by night;
With every tiny living thing
Rejoicing in the light.

And every star above,
Set in the deep blue sky,
All tell me that our God is love,
All tell me He is nigh.

—*Jane E. Leeson*

GOD'S GLORY IN THE HEAVENS

The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament showeth his handiwork.

Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night showeth knowledge.
There is no speech nor language,
Where their voice is not heard.
Their line is gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.

THE RAINBOW
From a painting by Millet

In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,
Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
And rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.
His going forth is unto the end of the heaven,
And his circuit unto the ends of it,
And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills.
From whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
He that keepeth thee will not slumber;
Behold he that keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper,
The Lord is thy shade on thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil,
He shall preserve thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and
thy coming in
From this time forth, and even forevermore.

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.
By the word of the Lord were the heavens made;
And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.
He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap:
He layeth up the depth in storehouses.

©Curtis & Cameron

"I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS"
From a painting by W. L. Taylor

THE BEATITUDES

Blessed are the poor in spirit;
For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn;
For they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek;
For they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst
after righteousness·
For they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful;
For they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart;
For they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers;
For they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they that are persecuted for
righteousness' sake;
For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

THE GOLDEN RULE

AS GIVEN BY MATTHEW

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you,
Do ye even so to them:
For this is the Law and the prophets.

AS GIVEN BY LUKE

As ye would that men should do to you,
Do ye also to them likewise.

AS EXPLAINED BY JESUS

For if ye love them who love you, what thank have ye?
For sinners also love those that love them.
And if ye do good to them who do good to you, what thank have ye?
For sinners also do even the same.
And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye?
For sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

But love ye your enemies,
And do good and lend, hoping for nothing again,
And your reward shall be great,
And ye shall be the children of the Highest:
For *He* is kind unto the unthankful and the evil.
Be ye therefore merciful,
As your Father also is merciful.

©*E. A. Perry*

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT
From a painting by H. J. Sinkel

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

In Shortened Form for Children

1

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

2

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

3

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

4

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

5

Honor thy father and thy mother.

6

Thou shalt not kill.

7

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8

Thou shalt not steal.

9

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

10

Thou shalt not covet.

CHRIST CHILD AND PROCESSION OF CHILDREN

THE TWO GREATEST COMMANDMENTS

AND one of the scribes came and asked him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"

And Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is, HEAR, O ISRAEL: The Lord our God is one Lord!

"'And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength':

"This is the First Commandment. And the Second is like; namely, this:

"'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'

"There is none other commandment greater than these."

And the scribe said to him, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth! For there *is* one God; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said to him, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

This is the first and great command:
To love thy God above.
And this the second: As thyself
Thou shalt thy neighbor love.
Who is my neighbor? He who needs
The help that I can give;
And both the Law and Prophets say:
"This do, and thou shalt live."

©Curtis & Cameron

KITTY

From a painting by W. J. Baer

LAWS OF KINDNESS

IF a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether there be young ones, or eggs, and the mother sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the mother with the young: but thou shalt in any wise let the mother go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.

When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.

And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and strangers.

When thou comest into thy neighbor's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel.

When thou comest into the standing grain of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle to thy neighbor's standing grain.

Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.

When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence.

If thy brother be grown poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee.

Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man.

ADORING THE CHILD
From a painting by Ipgar

VERSES FOR THANKSGIVING DAY

In the olden days the Jewish people were taught to go outdoors together, as soon as the first harvest had come in, and build tents of boughs of trees, and live in them for a week, and thank God for his goodness. This was the happiest of all their feasts. Some of the Jews still celebrate it. This is the account of it in the Bible:

When ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days. And ye shall take you on the first day the fruit of enclosed trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord seven days, and ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year.

This big picnic was the Jewish Thanksgiving Day. It came in the late springtime. Once, after the Jewish people had rebuilt their temple, or church, and were very happy to have it beautiful again, they all came together and celebrated a Thanksgiving Day. These verses tell what their leader told them to do to celebrate the day:

Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord; neither be ye sorry, for
"The joy of the Lord is your strength."

One day in the summer, when Jesus had gone away for his vacation with his friends, so many people came to be with him, that he decided he would give them all a picnic together outdoors. This beautiful story from the Bible tells us how Jesus made a Thanksgiving Day to everybody who loved him:

And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

And he said to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while": for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them and came together to him.

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him and said, "This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat."

He answered and said to them, "Give ye them to eat."

And they say to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?"

Philip answered, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little."

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith to him, "There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"

And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to Heaven, and blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

And they did all eat, and were filled.

VERSES FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY

Thou shalt keep the Feast of Ingathering, at the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in all thy labors.

Thou crownest the year with thy goodness,
And thy paths drop fatness;
They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness,
And the little hills rejoice on every side.
The pastures are clothed with flocks,
The valleys also are covered over with corn,
They shout for joy,
They also sing.

I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High,
I will remember the works of the Lord,
Surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past,

NEW YEAR'S NIGHT
From a painting by Julius Kronberg

And as a watch in the night.
So teach us to number our days,
That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
Let thy work appear unto thy servants,
And thy glory unto their children.
And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.

ANGELS
From a painting by Botticelli

VERSES FOR EASTER

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

They who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world . . . neither can they die any more: for they are equal to the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father Who is in Heaven.

They are before the throne of God,
And serve him day and night in his temple:
And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.
They shall hunger no more,
Neither thirst any more,
Neither shall the sun light on them or any heat.
For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd,
And shall lead them unto living fountains of waters,
And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

HOLY FAMILY AND ANGELS

From a painting by Walther Firle

VERSES FOR CHRISTMAS

THE BABY JESUS AND THE SHEPHERDS

AND she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said to them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, good will toward men!"

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into Heaven, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us."

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

LULLED TO SLEEP BY ANGELS
From a painting by L. A. Tessier

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told to them.

And when eight days were accomplished, his name was called JESUS.

THE BABY JESUS AND THE WISE MEN

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet:

'And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
Art not the least among the princes of Judah,
For out of thee shall come a Governor,
That shall rule my people Israel.'"

Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

When they heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold and frankincense and myrrh.

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

THE ADORATION OF THE WISE MEN
From a painting by W. A. Bouguereau

STORIES OF SERVICE AND DEVOTION

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

FROM "THE LITTLE FLOWERS OF SAINT FRANCIS" AND OTHER SOURCES

ONCE, a good man had a dream. He thought he saw Jesus walk into a church, and wherever he walked he left golden footprints. Behind him came the twelve apostles and the martyrs and many of his disciples. Each tried to walk in the Master's footsteps. Many almost did so, but some failed. After they had passed and the dust from the treading of so many feet had settled, and the golden footsteps could hardly be seen, then, in his vision, the dreamer saw a little monk in brown come into the church with a broom and sweep all the way clean, until the footprints of the Christ shone as clear and bright as before.

This little monk was Saint Francis of Assisi.

He was a rich man's son, and had been a soldier; but after he was wounded, he became thoughtful and felt the call to follow Jesus. He thought he heard Christ say to him, "Go to my brothers, and give them to drink of the chalice of Life."

So Francis went, going on foot and barefoot through all the highways of Italy, talking to those he met, and inviting them to come back to the simple ways of Jesus. To those who wished to pray he gave the Lord's Prayer, and to those who desired the Way of Life he gave the Way of Love. A few disciples began to follow him, and a few women wished to help his work; and there grew up a third class, who remained in their homes and there endeavored to live the life of Poverty, Purity and Obedience. Those who walked with Francis had no property, but they were cared for, as were Jesus and the Twelve, by those to whom they ministered.

His chief virtue was Courtesy. He was, in its best sense a Christian gentleman. "Courtesy," he said once, "is one

SAINT FRANCIS AND THE LAMBS

From a drawing by Eugène Burnand

of the properties of God, who gives his sun and rain to the just and unjust by Courtesy: and Courtesy is the sister of Charity, by which hatred is extinguished and love is cherished."

He extended his courtesy to all living things. He loved whatever was beautiful that God had made, and especially the birds and the wild things. His sermon to the birds is famous. This is the way it is described in "The Little Flowers of St. Francis."

"And as with great fervor he was going on the way, he lifted up his eyes and beheld some trees hard by the road, whereon sat a great company of birds well-nigh without number; whereat Saint Francis marveled, and said to his companions: 'Ye shall wait for me here upon the way, and I will go to preach unto my little sisters, the birds.' And he went unto the field and began to preach unto the birds that were on the ground; and immediately those that were on the trees flew down to him, and they all of them remained still and quiet together until Saint Francis made an end of preaching; and not even then did they depart until he had given them his blessing. Saint Francis went among them touching them with his cloak, howbeit none moved from out his place. The sermon that Saint Francis preached unto them was after this fashion: 'My little sisters, the birds, much bounden are ye unto God, your Creator, and always in every place ought ye to praise Him, for that He hath given you liberty to fly about everywhere, and hath also given you double and triple raiment; moreover He preserved your seed in the ark of Noah, that your race might not perish out of the world; still more are ye beholden to Him for the element of the air which He hath appointed for you; beyond all this, ye sow not, neither do ye reap; and God feedeth you and giveth you the streams and fountains for your drink, the mountains and the valleys for your refuge, and the high trees whereon to make your nests; and because ye know not

SAINT FRANCIS PREACHING TO THE BIRDS
From a painting by Jakob Machado

how to spin or sew, God clotheth you, you and your children; wherefore your Creator loveth you much, seeing that He hath bestowed on you so many benefits; and therefore, my little sisters, beware of the sin of ingratitude, and study always to give praises unto God.'"

When as Saint Francis spake these words to them, those birds began all of them to open their beaks and stretch their necks, and spread their wings and reverently bend their heads down to the ground, and by their acts and by their songs to show that the holy Father gave them joy exceeding great.

At the last, having ended the preaching, Saint Francis made ever to them the sign of the cross, and gave them leave to go away; and thereby all the birds with wondrous singing rose up in the air; and then, in the fashion of the cross that Saint Francis had made over them, divided themselves into four parts; and the one part flew toward the east, and the other towards the west, and the other towards the south, and the fourth towards the north, and each flight went on its way singing wondrous songs; signifying thereby that even as Saint Francis, the standard bearer of the Cross of Christ, had preached unto them and made over them the sign of the cross, after the pattern of which they separated themselves unto the four parts of the world: even so the preaching of the Cross of Christ, renewed by Saint Francis, would be carried by him and the brothers throughout all the world.

When, toward the end of his life, he was given a mountain top for a resting place, the old legend says that, as he approached to take possession, a multitude of birds flew about him, and many settled on his shoulders. Then Francis smiled and said: "I think it must be pleasant to our Lord Jesus Christ that we should dwell in this solitary place, since our brothers and sisters, the birds, are so glad at our coming."

A falcon had made her nest beside his cave. And in the morning she would wake him at five with her song for his matins. But if she saw that he was unusually weary, "discreetly" she would postpone her orisons until six.

A wolf, it is said, was tamed by his word, and, instead of being a terror to a village, became the pet of every household—a parable, perhaps, of the conversion of some hill-town brigand.

"A little boy, very pure and innocent, was received into his order," who, with a boy's curiosity, desired to know what Francis did whenever he went forth at night. Following him in the darkness once, he heard him praying; and seeing about him a marvelous light, he fell into a deep swoon. "Francis, returning to the house, stumbled upon the little boy lying as though dead upon the ground; and in pity he lifted him up and bore him in his arms, as doth the good shepherd with his sheep."

Of no other man could it be more truly said, that in his life and spirit, "He resembled Jesus Christ."

MADONNA WITH SLEEPING CHILD
From a painting by George Hitchcock

THE SHEPHERD WHO DIDN'T GO

By Jay T. Stocking

YOU have all heard of the shepherds who went to Bethlehem, but I do not believe any of you have heard of the shepherd who didn't go. The Bible does not say anything about him, but his story has come to me, and I am going to tell it to you.

The city of Bethlehem stood on a hill. Below the town, with its steep narrow streets and white walls, were gray olive orchards. Below the orchards were gardens bright with flowers. Below the gardens lay green meadows, and beyond these the pasture lands that stretched away to the wilderness plains where little patches of grass grew among the bushes and between the great rocks. There were caves among these rocks where wolves used to skulk and sometimes robbers hid. So the shepherds who guarded their flocks in these wild pastures dared not leave them alone.

One clear, beautiful night many centuries ago, four shepherds were watching their flocks on these pastures, Samuel, Ezra, Joel, and Dahvid were their names. Samuel, Ezra, and Joel were strong men, no longer young, with shaggy eyebrows and brown beards; Ezra's was short, Joel's long, and Samuel's streaked with gray. They owned the flocks which they tended. Dahvid was a boy with ruddy cheeks, bright eyes, and strong, lithe limbs. He cared for the flocks of old Abraham. Abraham was old and rich, and did not work any more, but hired Dahvid, whose family was very poor, to care for his sheep.

The flocks of the four shepherds were lying quiet on the plain far below the city, and near by, Samuel, Ezra, Joel, and Dahvid lay wrapped in their shepherd cloaks.

"Samuel," said Dahvid, rising upon his elbow.

"What is it, Dahvid?" asked the other in a deep voice.

"Are you not glad that you tend sheep in Bethlehem instead of in some distant place?"

"Why, Dahvid?" asked Samuel sleepily.

"Because it is in Bethlehem that the King we have been looking for so long is to be born. I have been reading it in the prophets only today."

"Have you only just heard of that?" asked Ezra sourly.

"No," replied the boy hotly, "I have heard my mother tell of it ever since I can remember, and I have read it over and over again. Samuel!"

"Yes, Dahvid?"

"Do you think we shall ever see the promised King?"

"I do not know, my boy," the older man answered sadly. "We have waited long, and there seems little hope for Israel now. But he will come some day, he will come some day. Why do you ask, Dahvid?"

"I cannot tell. It is often in my mind. Something makes me think of it tonight. Perhaps it is because I read of him today. Samuel, I would walk to the end of the earth to see the Christ Child."

"Well, you need not start now," grumbled Ezra; and Joel added roughly, "Go to sleep, boy, the hour is late."

It was much later before Dahvid fell asleep, for his head was full of dreams and the stories of wonderful days to come that his mother had told him. But at length he joined the rest in healthy slumber.

Suddenly it seemed to each of them that something passed over him and touched him lightly on the cheek. The older men raised themselves on their elbows, but Dahvid sprang to his feet. At first they saw only a great light, which nearly blinded them, then they discerned a shining form in the sky, and heard a voice saying: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people;

for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

And then all the sky was full of light, and the air was full of heavenly voices, singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

While the shepherds listened, half joyful, half afraid, the light faded and the voices floated away—"Good will to men—to men—to men," and all was still as before. For a moment the shepherds looked at each other in silent awe and wonder. Then Ezra spoke in a voice dry with fear, "What was it?"

Dahvid stood speechless, and Samuel answered reverently "Angels."

"Brothers," he continued, "a wonderful thing has happened to us. It has been a long, long day since angels have spoken to men."

Then he girded his shepherd's cloak about him and seized his staff. "Come, Ezra, Joel, Dahvid, let us be going."

"Going—where?" asked Ezra and Joel.

"Why, to Bethlehem to see the Child. Did not the angel tell us the sign? Let us go at once to find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

"There be many mangers in Bethlehem," objected Ezra.

"I know not how we shall find him," said Joel. "It is a vain search, I fear," and he drew his cloak about him and reached for his staff, "but I will go with you if you say."

So they started, Samuel, Ezra, and Joel—but Dahvid stood still.

"Come, Dahvid, make haste!" called Samuel.

But the boy did not move.

"I cannot go," he said.

"Cannot go!" cried Samuel in amazement; and Ezra added, "Who said but a little while ago that he would go to the end of the earth to see the King?"

"And so I would," cried Dahvid; "but the sheep—we cannot leave the sheep alone."

"The sheep will be safe enough," said Samuel. "The dogs will keep them together. There are no wolves tonight. Come, Dahvid."

But the boy was firm, "There is my master; he'll be angry if I leave his flocks alone."

"Old Abraham will never know," said Joel.

"Abraham is a hard master," said Dahvid. "Many a time I have felt his heavy staff on my back, but it is not that which keeps me. I have given him my word that, come day, come night, come life, come death, I will not fail to keep the flocks. Go on without me; I must keep my word. Go on."

So they went on, impatient and eager for this wondrous quest, Ezra and Joel muttering now and then at the obstinacy of the boy, but Samuel full of glowing admiration. Dahvid watched them as they moved up the hill. That dream of finding the Christ Child,—how could he give it up? Once he started forward: "I *will* go!" But something held him back, and he threw himself on the ground and kept back tears of bitter disappointment. After a time he grew calmer and found comfort in thinking of the helplessness of his flock.

Suddenly the low growling of his dog brought him to his feet. But he saw nothing, heard nothing, and bade the dog be still. In a moment, with a bark of alarm, the dog was up again and away. Dahvid sprang up, certain now that danger was near. There was panic in the flock. Toward the wilderness he could see lean, gray forms moving stealthily and swiftly among the sheep. Wolves! Springing upon a rock, and waving his cloak in circles about his head, he uttered the familiar call which gathered the sheep about him, his own sheep nearest, and behind them the flocks of Samuel, Ezra, and Joel. The wolves made off, and Dahvid quickly looked over his flock to see if all were there,—for the Eastern shepherd knows his sheep by name.

One by one he named them, with an increasing feeling of relief. They were all there. No! One was missing,—Ke-barbara, the pet of the flock. Ke-barbara means "striped," and the little sheep was so called because of the dark marking of her fleece. After waving his staff over the huddled beasts, and uttering a few times the soothing cry, "Hoo-o-o, ta-a-a! hoo-o-o, ta-a-a!" he rushed off in the direction which the wolves had taken. At the top of the steep bank at the edge of the pasture, he stopped and called, "Ke-barbara! Ke-barbara!" and for answer heard an anguished bleat from the rocks below.

It was a steep and slippery way, but Dahvid plunged down with no thought of anything but the sheep. Loose stones gave way, and he lost his footing. At the bottom he picked himself up unhurt, and there beside him were two wolves quarreling over the wounded sheep. One of them slunk away at the sight of the boy, but the other had had a taste of blood and sprang at Dahvid, missing his throat but sinking his teeth into his arm. He sprang again, and this time tore his leg. Then Dahvid, as the beast turned to spring again, struck him a heavy blow on the head with his staff and killed him. His own wounds were bleeding and painful, but he turned at once with caressing words to the sheep.

"Ke-barbara, they have hurt you, little sheep! But they have not killed you; no, they have not killed you! I reached you just in time. You cannot walk; can you? And I am afraid I cannot carry you. But I can help. There, put your head on my arm." He groaned with pain. "No, the other one." So he talked to her, as to a child, as the wounded boy and the wounded sheep slowly made their way up the steep hillside and over the rough rocks. It was not a long way, and, half an hour before, the sturdy shepherd lad would have bounded over it quickly enough. But now the wounded leg was slow, the wounded arm was weak, and the wounded lamb seemed very heavy. It was a weary journey, with many stops. When at last they reached the flock, still huddled trembling together, Dahvid had only strength to give one reassuring "Hoo-o-o, ta-a-a," then fell exhausted.

How long he lay there he did not know; but the dawn was growing bright when three men appeared from the direction of the town. It was not the shepherds, but old Abraham and two of his servants. As the old man caught sight of his flock, but saw no shepherd, he raged with anger. "Dahvid!" he shouted fiercely. "Dahvid!" There was no answer.

"The young vagabond! He has left the sheep. Of great worth are his promises! He would keep my flock. 'Come life—come death!' Dahvid! Let me once find him and I will give him something he will remember longer than he does his vows."

As he drew near the flock, he discovered the boy lying on the ground. "Ah, asleep is he? and the sun this high! Come, get up!" he shouted fiercely, and lifted his staff to strike. But, as he did so, he caught sight of the white face and the bleeding arm, and noticed the wounded sheep. Old Abraham dropped his angry arm, and there was a touch of tenderness that was strange to him, as he continued: "Ah. Dahvid, boy! You did not forget your promises; did you, Dahvid? And I would have struck you! Forgive me, my lad." Then, turning to his servants, he gave them command: "Take him to the inn and bid them care for him. I, myself, will keep the flock today."

The servants bowed low, "The inn is full, my lord."

Old Abraham commanded again positively, "Take him to the inn, I say."

"But the inn is full, my lord," replied the older servant, trembling.

Then the other servant spoke, "There is perhaps room in the stable, my lord."

"Then bear him thither, and bid them give him the best of care. Go at once."

So the servants bore Dahvid away, still unconscious from his wounds, and made him comfortable on a bed of straw in the stable of the inn.

It was some hours before he came to himself. When at last he opened his eyes, and his ears began to catch once more the sounds about him, the first thing he heard was a faint cry. "What is that?" he asked eagerly of Samuel, who was watching beside him.

"That," said the old shepherd, in tones of mingled joy and reverence, "is the Child the angels told us about, the Child we came to see. We found him here in the stable, in a manger."

"And I am not to see him?"

"Yes, you are," said Samuel, and a grave-faced man brought the Child and laid him in Dahvid's arms, the Child for whose coming the people had been longing for a thousand years.

The color at length came back to Dahvid's white cheeks, and strength and health to his limbs; and he went back again to the plain. Old Abraham embraced him. "Forgive me, my son. I have been a hard master. Thou hast been very faithful, and for thy reward I make thee lord over all my flocks, and half of them shall be thine own."

So Dahvid became a man of flocks, and all his days he was known among the other shepherds as the one who had held the Christ Child in his arms. And there was none among them who was thought so brave and gentle and wise as the Shepherd Who Didn't Go.

From *The City that Never Was Reached*, Jay T. Stocking. Published by The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.

THE MADONNA
From a painting by Botticelli

WHERE LOVE IS, THERE GOD IS ALSO

ADAPTED FROM A STORY BY TOLSTOY

IN a certain city lived Martin, the cobbler. He dwelt in a cellar with a single window, and the window looked out on to the street. Through it Martin could just see the passers-by. He could see little more than their boots, but there was hardly a pair of boots in the neighborhood which had not passed through his hands once or twice. Martin's wife was dead, but she had left him a little boy—three years old. Their other children had not lived. No sooner had the little one begun to grow up and be a help and a joy to his father's heart than a sickness fell upon him. He took to his bed, lay there in a raging fever for a week, and then died. Martin buried his son in despair—so desperate was he that he began to murmur against God.

Then, one day there came to Martin an aged peasant-pilgrim. Martin began talking with him and complaining of his great sorrow. "As for living any longer," said he, "I desire it not. Would only that I might die! What is there to live for?"

And the old man answered, "For God, Martin! He gave thee thy life, and for him, therefore, must thou live. Once thou dost begin to live for him, thou wilt grieve about nothing any more, and all things will come easy to thee."

Martin was silent for a minute, and then he said, "And how can one live for God?"

"Buy the Gospels and read; there thou wilt find how to live for God. There everything is explained."

Martin went the same day and bought for himself a New Testament printed in very large type, and began to read.

He at first thought he would read it only on holidays; but as he read, it did his heart so much good that he began to read it every day. And the more he read the more clearly he understood what God wanted of him, and why he ought to live for God; and his heart grew lighter and lighter continually.

From that time the whole life of Martin was changed. His life became quiet and joyful. He sat down to his work in the morning, worked out his time, then took down his lamp from the wall, placed it on the table, and sat him to read. And the more he read the better he understood, and his heart grew brighter and happier.

One morning Martin arose, prayed to God, and sat down by his window to work. As he sat there, he looked almost as much at his window as at his work; and whenever a strange pair of boots passed by, he bent forward and looked out of the window, so as to see the face as well as the feet of the passerby. Presently there passed close to the window an old soldier, one of Nicholas's veterans, in tattered old boots, with a shovel in his hands. The old fellow was called Stepánich, and lived with the neighboring shopkeeper, who kept him in his house for charity. Stepánich stopped before Martin's window to clear away the snow.

Martin glanced at him and then went on with his work, but after he had taken a few stitches he looked out of the window again. Stepánich was leaning his shovel against the wall and seemed to be resting himself.

"The old man is very much broken," said Martin to himself. "It is quite plain that he has scarcely strength enough to scrape away the snow. Suppose I make him drink a little tea! The samovar is just on the boil." Martin put down his awl, got up, placed the samovar on the table, made tea, then tapped on the window with his fingers. Martin beckoned to the old man and then went and opened the door.

"Come in and warm yourself a bit," said he. "You're a bit chilled, eh?"

"May God bless thee! Yes, and all my bones ache too," said Stepánich. He came in and shook off the snow.

"Come in and sit down," said Martin. "Here, take a cup of tea."

Martin filled two cups and passed one to his visitor; and as Martin drank his tea, he could not help glancing at the window from time to time.

Stepánich emptied his cup, and turning it upside down, put what was left of his piece of sugar on the top.

"I thank thee, Martin," said he. "Thou hast refreshed me both in body and soul."

"Thou wilt show me a kindness by coming again. I am glad to have a guest," said Martin. Stepánich went away, and Martin sat down by the window to work. As he stitched, he kept looking out of the window and thinking about what he had read in the Bible. His head was full of Christ's sayings.

But now Martin saw right in front of his window an old woman, a huckster. She carried a basket of apples. Not many were left; she had no doubt sold nearly all of them. Across her shoulder she carried a sack full of chips which she was taking home. She must have picked them up near some new building. It was plain that the sack was hurting her shoulder, and she wanted to shift it on to the other shoulder; so she put it down on the pavement, placed the apple basket on a small post, and began shaking down the chips in the sack. Now while she was doing this, a boy in a ragged cap suddenly ran up, snatched one of the apples out of the basket, and would have made off with it, but the wary old woman turned quickly round and gripped the urchin by the sleeve. The lad fought and tried to tear himself loose; but the old woman held on with both hands, knocked his cap off, and seized hold of his hair. The lad howled, and the woman scolded him. Martin did not stop to put away his awl; but throwing it on the floor, he rushed out of the door. Stumbling on the steps and dropping his glasses in his hurry, Martin ran out into the street.

The old woman was tugging at the lad's hair and wanted to drag him off to the police, while the boy fought and kicked.

"I didn't take it," said he. "What are you whacking me for? Let me go!"

Martin came up and tried to part them. He seized the lad by the arm and said: "Let him go, little mother! Forgive him for Christ's sake!"

"I'll forgive him so that he shan't forget it for a year! I'll take the rascal to the police!"

Martin began to entreat with the old woman.

"Let him go, little mother; he will not do so any more."

The old woman let him go. The lad would have run away, but Martin held him fast.

"Beg the little mother's pardon," said he, "and don't do such things any more. I saw thee take it."

The lad began to cry and to beg pardon.

"Well, that's right! And now, there's an apple for thee." And Martin took one out of the basket and gave it to the boy. "I'll pay thee for it, little mother," he said to the old woman.

"Thou wilt ruin them that way, the young rascals," said the old woman. "He ought to be whipped so that he should not be able to sit down for a week."

"Oh, little mother, little mother!" cried Martin, "that is our way, but it is not God's way. If he ought to be whipped so for the sake of one apple, what should be done to us for our sins?"

The old woman was silent.

"God bids us forgive," said Martin, "otherwise he will not forgive us. We must forgive every one, a thoughtless boy most of all." The old woman shook her head and sighed.

Now, just as the old woman was about to hoist the sack on to her shoulder, the lad sprang forward and said:

"Give it here, and I'll carry it for thee, granny! I am going your way."

The old woman nodded her head, and put the sack on the lad's shoulder.

Martin followed them with his eyes till they were out of sight, then went back into the house. He worked away for a little while, but soon he was scarcely able to distinguish the stitches. "It seems to be time to light up," thought he. He gathered up his tools, swept up the cuttings, put away the thread and the bristles, took down the lamp, placed it on the table, and took the Gospels from the shelf. He wanted to find the passage where he had last evening placed a strip of morocco leather, but the book opened at another place. And just as Martin opened it, it seemed to him as if some person were moving behind him. Martin glanced round and saw that somebody was indeed standing in the dark corner—yes, some one was really there, but who, he could not exactly make out. Then a voice whispered in his ear,

"Martin! Martin! dost thou not know me?"

"Who art thou?" muttered Martin.

"It is I," cried the voice, "lo, 'tis I!" And forth from the dark corner stepped Stepánich. He smiled, and it was as though a little cloud were vanishing, and he was gone.

"It is I!" said the voice once more, and the old woman and the lad with the apple stepped forth, and both of them smiled, and they also disappeared.

And Martin's soul was glad. He put on his glasses and began to read the Gospels just where the book had opened. And at the top of the page he read: "For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in."

And at the bottom of the page he read this: "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

THE CHILD JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

From a painting by Murillo

MY BEST BOOK

The Star has been the symbol of the supremely precious things of life for long ages,—the faithful, the reliable, the highest ideal, unattainable but never lost, reappearing in its proper place after the severest storms. The north star early attained first place among the host of heaven, as the one fixed star, and therefore the star to be depended upon for guidance by night. The Star of Bethlehem became more intimate with man, and guided him by actually going before him, until it stood over the place where the young child lay. The star is, then, the most appropriate symbol for My Best Book, with its light to guide little feet into the paths of peace.

Then the traveler in the dark
Thanks you for your tiny spark;
He could not see which way to go
If you did not twinkle so.